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SAMANTHA ZACHER

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PREACHING
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THE STYLE AND
RHETORIC OF
THE VERCELLI
BOOK HOMILIES



PREACHING THE CONVERTED: THE STYLE AND
RHETORIC OF THE VERCELLI BOOK HOMILIES

Preaching the Converted: The Style and Rhetoric of the Vercelli Book Homilies

SAMANTHA ZACHER

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*For my Mother and Father,
Linda and Morris*

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Abbreviations

ACMRS	Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies
<i>ÆHom</i>	Pope, ed., <i>Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection</i>
ANQ	(formerly) <i>American Notes and Queries</i>
ASE	<i>Anglo-Saxon England</i>
ASNSL	<i>Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen</i>
ASPR	Krapp and Dobbie, eds, <i>The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records</i>
BL	British Library
<i>Blickling</i>	Morris, ed., <i>The Blickling Homilies of the Tenth Century</i>
<i>Catalogue</i>	<i>Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon</i>
CCCC	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College
CPPMA	Machielsen, <i>Clavis Patristica Pseudepigraphorum Medii Aevi</i>
CHI	Clemoes, ed., <i>Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: the First Series</i>
CHII	Godden, ed., <i>Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: the Second Series</i>
CSASE	Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England
CUL	Cambridge University Library
DOE	<i>Dictionary of Old English</i> , ed. A. Cameron et al. (Toronto, 1986–)
EEMF	Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile
EETS	Early English Text Society
o.s.	original series
s.s.	supplementary series
ELN	<i>English Language Notes</i>
ES	<i>English Studies</i>
Fontes	<i>Fontes Anglo-Saxonici database</i> (http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk)
Handlist	Gneuss, <i>Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts</i>
HE	Colgrave and Mynors, eds, <i>Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People</i>

Irvine	Irvine, <i>Old English Homilies from MS Bodley 343</i>
JEGP	(formerly) <i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>
KCLMS	King's College London Medieval Series
Laws	Thorpe, ed., <i>The Ancient Laws and Institutes of England</i>
Life	Gonser, ed., <i>Das angelsächsische Prosa-Leben des hl. Guthlac</i>
LSE	<i>Leeds Studies in English</i>
MÆ	<i>Medium Ævum</i>
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
MLN	<i>Modern Language Notes</i>
MLQ	<i>Modern Language Quarterly</i>
MLR	<i>Modern Language Review</i>
MP	<i>Modern Philology</i>
MRTS	Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies
MS	<i>Mediaeval Studies</i>
N&Q	<i>Notes and Queries</i>
Napier	Napier, ed., <i>Wulfstan. Sammlung der ihm zugeschriebenen Homilien nebst Untersuchungen über ihre Echtheit, I: Text und Varianten</i>
NM	<i>Neuphilologische Mitteilungen</i>
OEN	<i>Old English Newsletter</i>
PBA	<i>Proceedings of the British Academy</i>
Pembroke	Cross, ed., <i>Cambridge Pembroke College MS 25: A Carolingian Sermonary Used by Anglo-Saxon Preachers</i>
PG	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i> , ed. J.P. Migne, 162 vols. (Paris, 1857–66)
PL	<i>Patrologia Latina</i> , ed. J.P. Migne, 221 vols. (Paris, 1844–64)
PMLA	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association</i>
PQ	<i>Philological Quarterly</i>
RES	<i>Review of English Studies</i>
Rogationtide	Bazire and Cross, eds, <i>Eleven Old English Rogationtide Homilies</i>
SASLC	Biggs et al., eds, <i>Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture: A Trial Version</i>
SASLC 1	Biggs, et al., ed. <i>Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture: Volume I</i>
SN	<i>Studia Neophilologica</i>
TOES	Toronto Old English Series
VH	Scragg, ed., <i>The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts</i>
VSG	Colgrave, ed., <i>Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac</i>
Wulfstan	Bethurum, ed., <i>The Homilies of Wulfstan</i>

List of Manuscripts Cited According to Scragg's *Sigla*

- E Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 340 and 342
- F Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 198
- G Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 162
- H Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 303
- I Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 343
- L Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 115, 140–7
- N Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 419 and 421
- O Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 121; Hatton 113 and 114
- P British Library, Cotton Cleopatra B.xiii; London, Lambeth Palace Library, 489
- Xd Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 201, pp. 1–178, Part B

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Preface

The power of preaching is a theme expressed constantly in the writings that survive from the Anglo-Saxon period. One of the earliest and most memorable pieces of Christian exhortation apparently spoken by an Englishman in the Anglo-Saxon period is found in Bede's account of King Edwin's conversion to Christianity in AD 627. In this well-known narrative, composed in 731 (a full century after the event), the king is said to remain in the darkness of his disbelief until an inspired (and presumably pagan) member of his group of counsellors, the so-called *witan*, delivers the following appropriately eloquent simile (quoted here in Bede's Latin), explaining the merits of accepting the new teaching of Christianity (*HE* II.13):¹

'Talis ... mihi uidetur, rex, uita hominum praesens in terris, ad comparationem eius quod nobis incertum est temporis, quale cum te residente ad caenam cum ducibus ac ministris tuis tempore brumali, accenso quidem foco in medio et calido effecto cenaculo, furentibus autem foris per omnia turbinibus hiemalium pluuiarum uel niuium, adueniens unus passerum domum citissime peruolauerit; qui cum per unum ostium ingrediens mox per aliud exierit, ipso quidem tempore quo intus est hiemis tempestate non tangitur, sed tamen paruissimo spatio serenitatis ad momentum excurso, mox de hieme in hiemem regrediens, tuis oculis elabatur. Ita haec uita hominum ad modicum apparet; quid autem sequatur, quidue praecesserit, prorsus ignoramus. Vnde, si haec noua doctrina certius aliquid attulit, merito esse sequenda uidetur.'

[King, the present life of men on earth, when compared to that time which is unknown to us, seems to me like when you are sitting at dinner with your thegns and counsellors in the winter-time, with a blazing hearth and the hall warmed through, a sparrow flits very swiftly through the building, coming in at one gable and leaving by the other. For the time it is inside, it is untouched by the winter-storms, but after the briefest respite of calm has passed, it is soon back to the winter it escaped, and lost to your sight. Just so does the life of men appear for a brief space, and we know nothing of what follows or what came before. So if this new teaching has brought anything more certain, it seems worth following.]

Up to this point, Edwin has had many incentives for converting to Christianity: he has married the Christian queen Ethelberga on the explicit condition that he convert (*HE* II.9); he has survived an attempt made upon his life by an assassin on the same miraculous Easter night that his daughter Eanfled was born (*HE*

II.9); he and his wife have received letters from the bishop Boniface and Pope Gregory the Great encouraging him to convert upon the peril of his soul (*HE* II.10–11); he has been granted a heavenly vision, in which he is saved by a Christ-figure while staying at the court of Rædwald (*HE* II.12); and he has been thoroughly steeped in Christian doctrine by the teachings of Bishop Paulinus (*HE* II.13). And yet, despite this notable string of events, it is not until he hears the words of his anonymous counsellor that he is convinced to undertake baptism and to burn all the idols in his kingdom. The themes of this passage have been considered often, with the Psalms identified as a likely ultimate source:² for example, one psalm verse notes how the figures of the sparrow and turtle-dove nesting and feeding their young are presented as an image of the heart and body of man rejoicing in the comfort of God ('Etenim passer inuenit sibi domum et turtur nidum ubi reponat pullos suos' [Psalm 83:4]), while another offers the image of a lone sparrow enclosed in a building as a figure for the wakeful psalmist desiring unity with God ('uigilaui et factus sum sicut passer solitarius in aedificio' [Psalm 101:8]). The Old English rendering of the same conversionary narrative about Edwin contains still further biblical echoes not found in the Latin. So, for example, the Old English phrase *eagan bryhtm* ('the twinkle of an eye'), which refers to the briefest possible moment in which the sparrow achieves temporary safety from the clutches of winter, invites additional links with 1 Corinthians 15:52: 'in momento in ictu oculi in nouissima tuba canet enim et mortui resurgent incorrupti et nos immutabimur' ('In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall rise again incorruptible: and we shall be changed').³ The Judgment Day context of 1 Corinthians 15:52, when added to Bede's Latin simile, deepens the sense of inevitable demise implied in the original figure, even as it emphasizes the urgent need for change to a faith in something more permanent.

But in searching for sources for this striking simile, scholars have elided the anomaly of an apparently pagan counsellor slipping so easily into the biblically allusive diction that is commonly found in homilies and other preaching-texts from the Anglo-Saxon period. Are we then to suppose that Edwin's counsellor had subsumed some message from the preaching of

Bishop Paulinus? Or that Bede has put some sermon of his own, drawn appropriately from biblical models, into the mouth of a conveniently anonymous and long-dead counsellor?

Certainly, there are numerous later homiletic discussions in Old English that consider the precariousness of human life using similes less vigorous but no less effective than that of Edwin's unnamed counsellor. In the anonymous homily known as Napier XXX.107–12 (and its variants, including in all likelihood Vercelli IX had it not been disrupted by a lacuna at just this point), we find the following admission made by the devil himself, forced by an anchorite to tell the truth concerning the insignificance of the present world:⁴

And he sæde þæt eal þes middaneard nære þe mare driges landes ofer þone mycelan garsecg þonne man ænne prican aprice on anum wæxbrede. And nys þes middaneard buton swylce se seofoða dæl ofer þone mycelan garsecg, se ðe mid his ormætnyse ealle ðas eorðan utan emblið.

[And he said that all this earth consisted of no more dry land across the great ocean than one might prick with a single prick on a broad wax-tablet. And this middle-earth is nothing but a seventh portion above the great ocean, which with its enormity surrounds all this earth from without.]

Like the fleeting journey of the sparrow in the *Historia ecclesiastica*, the insignificance of human life is here powerfully bound up with the supposed inconsequentiality of human ideas, where all is reduced to a single pin-prick on a tablet of wax. Perhaps even more thematically relevant to the Bedan example is the simile drawn from Vercelli X (and its variants), in which the passing away of earthly goods is treated as a fleeting shower (Vercelli X.241–4):⁵

Swa læne is sio oferlufu eorðan gestreona, emne hit bið gelice rena scurum, þonne he of heofenum swiðost dreoseð ⁊ eft hraðe eal toglideð, bið fæger weder ⁊ beorht sunne. Swa tealte syndon eorðan dreamas, ⁊ swa todæleð lic ⁊ sawle.

[So transitory is the excessive love of earthly treasures: it is just like showers of rain, when it falls most heavily from the heavens, and afterward all glides quickly away; there is fair weather and bright sun. So precarious are the joys of the earth, and so divides body and soul.]

The Vercelli passage likewise views this life as a brief

passageway. However, unlike the speech uttered by Edwin's counsellor, the Vercelli homilist explains the afterlife as the promise of fairer weather.

Such a homiletic reading of the simile in Bede works well in the context of the Edwin narrative, presenting as it does a response to and fulfilment of themes raised earlier in the sequence: the open gables through which the sparrow flies (presumably that is what Bede intends by using the word *ostia*, which usually means 'doors')⁶ recall the words of Bishop Boniface in the letter he had written to Edwin (*HE* II.10), instructing him that 'eius humanitas ad insinuationem sui reseratis cordis ianuis quae de semet ipsa proferetur secreta humanis mentibus inspiratione clementer infundit' ('[God's] humanity opens the doors of man's heart to admit him, mercifully infuses into their minds by secret inspiration some knowledge of himself').⁷ Likewise, the hearth-fire in the Bedan simile, which brings comfort to those enveloped in the security of the hall, could be read as an inversion and remedy for just that empty 'inward fire' (*caecus ignis*) that brings no light to Edwin as he grapples with the doomed vision he beheld at the court of King Rædwald.⁸

This example of apparently homiletic rhetoric in Bede's account of the conversion of King Edwin is just one of many in the *Historia ecclesiastica* that speak about the power of preaching and its effects on conversion, forming the building blocks upon which Bede eventually maps out the intellectual and historical foundations of the English church. In fact, read from one perspective, Bede's *Historia* could be taken as the fullest surviving account of preaching history in England up to the first quarter of the eighth century, a history whose development is all but shrouded in darkness until we reach the tenth century, when records survive that document the careful collection of such texts. It is precisely because of the paucity of sources that scholars have largely focused on the undoubted achievements of the remarkable flowering of English preaching in the tenth and eleventh centuries, led by skilled practitioners of the craft such as Ælfric (who flourished in the 990s) and Wulfstan (who died in 1023).

Here, however, our focus will not be upon the later efforts of known and named authors, but rather on those earlier and less celebrated preachers whose works were collected in the oldest

surviving manuscript collection of such texts, the so-called Vercelli Book (Vercelli, Biblioteca Capitolare CXVII). These authors, all anonymous like Edwin's counsellor, nonetheless amply demonstrate in their style and use of sources the richness and depth of an English preaching tradition that was evidently fully formed even then. Drawing upon the comparison forged in Napier XXX, one might be tempted to play devil's advocate (as it were) and seize upon the depressing thought that the homiletic output surviving from the Anglo-Saxon period probably represents little more than a pin-prick on the wax tablet of what was once preached and written. But then we might also be encouraged by the image of Bede's sparrow, which like the homilies of the Vercelli Book, offers to the careful reader an oasis of light and warmth and delight in the often wintry darkness of Old English literature now lost.

The title of this book, *Preaching the Converted: The Style and Rhetoric of the Vercelli Book Homilies*, is intended to highlight a series of paradoxes regarding the perceived rhetorical, didactic, and liturgical make-up of the Vercelli Book. Though it is generally assumed that the manuscript was assembled for the purpose of private devotional reading rather than for use in a liturgical context, the term 'preaching' appears in the title as a reminder of the important 'oral' texture that underlies these reading texts. While it is certainly true that the performative contexts surrounding the preaching of these homilies can never be recovered in full, the homilies themselves nevertheless have much to teach us about preaching practices in the Anglo-Saxon period. Not only do they on occasion provide a window into current events datable to the late tenth century (for example, touching on the increasing turbulence caused by Viking raids, the distressing corruption of the clergy, and the robbing and defacement of churches),⁹ but they also provide a diagnostic for the kinds of concerns that appear to have been in the minds of preachers in the early reform period. While normally the cliché 'preaching to the converted' suggests a needless redundancy of telling what is already known (or what is accepted as commonplace), the homilies of the Vercelli Book, by contrast, take a persistently proactive stance (not just a rhetorical posturing) in proscribing illicit behaviours and in encouraging virtuous ones. Though it seems clear that the Vercelli texts were

not chiefly designed for proselytizing, they do on occasion (even so late after the supposed time of conversion) warn about the still dangerously permeable terrain that demarcates Christian from pagan practices (which apparently still included witchcraft, magic, and idolatry). This permeability is reinforced by the fact that (as several of the homilists duly note) pagan roots so transparently underlie numerous Christian holidays and rituals.¹⁰

However, in the context of the present study, the idea of what is ‘converted’ is intended foremost to invoke the process by which so many of the Vercelli homilies came into being. With the majority of the texts having been derived to some extent from Latin patristic material, they mark both a continuance of tradition as well as a ‘turning’ from it, following the etymological sense of the Latin verb *conuertere*. Etymological serendipity also links the notions of ‘conversion’ and ‘conversation,’ and this double ‘conversation,’ both with what came before the homilies and with what is new, offers a useful lens through which to gauge the style and rhetoric of the homilies themselves. In focusing upon the literary merits of the prose texts in this collection, this book offers a new approach to the Vercelli homilies, providing the first sustained investigation of such features as verbal repetition, adaptation of Latin sources, recurring themes, connected metaphors, and mixed genres. By concentrating on what is common to the homilies, the book is positioned to interrogate several long-held assumptions about the audience, purpose, and arrangement of the items in the manuscript.

Chapters 1 and 2 provide a general background to the Vercelli manuscript, exploring still unanswered questions pertaining to its current location in Italy and its date of composition. The discussion then turns to formal analysis of the collection’s liturgical content, its literary and patristic influences, and the genres and styles of the Vercelli Book. By gauging points of similarity and difference with other contemporary homiletic collections, and by assessing the (albeit sparse) evidence for a rhetorical tradition in early vernacular literature, some orientation is provided for placing the Vercelli Book within the broader context of the early English homiletic tradition. Building on this overview, [chapter 3](#) considers more closely the sequence and order of the Vercelli homilies as a unit. Two homilies are

treated in detail, since Vercelli XXI replicates with variation almost all of the Doomsday material contained in Vercelli II. Commentary to date has unanimously viewed this textual repetition as a ‘mistake’ on the part of a ‘haphazard’ or ‘careless’ compiler. By teasing out the rhetorical differences between Vercelli II and XXI, and by examining still further examples of large-scale replication across the manuscript, a more deliberate methodology is suggested for the compilation of the manuscript than has hitherto been allowed. Moving from an examination of structure to a consideration of extra-textual influences, [chapter 4](#) compares aspects of Old English prose stylistics to the kinds of rhetorical techniques exemplified in both Latin source-texts and vernacular poetry. Vercelli X presents an ideal text for this study, because it draws freely upon three Latin texts (in the form of a homily, a mirror for princes, and a synonymical register), sometimes translating Latin constructions verbatim, and sometimes extemporizing freely beyond the source material. Focusing especially on those moments where the Old English departs from the Latin, an analysis is offered of various types of verbal repetition exhibited in the homily, such as envelope patterning and anaphora, which have largely been seen as poetic devices. Study of the homily’s use of instances of embedded lines of poetry and other passages containing both rhythmic and alliterative prose, demonstrates further the permeability of some of the rhetorical boundaries perceived to exist between Old English prose and poetry.

The three remaining chapters examine intra-textual relationships between the items in the manuscript. [Chapter 5](#) focuses on Vercelli XXII, which features a much neglected address spoken by the soul to the body after death. That similar speeches may also be found in Vercelli IV and in the Vercelli poem *Soul and Body I* (not to mention eight other vernacular versions of this topos) serves not only to illuminate further the audience and purpose of these addresses (for which a penitential context seems inescapable), but also to highlight persistent themes that serve as rhetorical centrepieces for the collection as a whole. Moving beyond the consideration of a single topos, [chapter 6](#) explores the use of similes and metaphors in all twenty-three prose items contained in the Vercelli Book. The widespread appearance of these figures in the Vercelli homilies reveals that they are not

merely ornamental to homiletic discourse, but rather provide economic and imaginative means for delivering key points of doctrine. Moreover, the apparent clustering of figures within particular homilies helps to generate a new vocabulary for analysing homiletic styles, which prove to be more variegated than the traditional bifurcation between exegetical and catechetical models would allow. The study of style leads to an examination of the various genres within the Vercelli Book in [chapter 7](#). Though most editions and analyses of the collection distinguish between three main genres – prose homilies, saints’ lives, and poetry – it is argued that the two saints’ lives found in Vercelli XVIII and XXIII (those of St Martin and St Guthlac, respectively) are eminently more difficult to classify. The chapter breaks with received criticism in viewing the text on St Guthlac as a hybrid composition (not a homily proper), containing a fusion of narrative, homiletic, and hagiographic forms. The text’s oddities include its lack of traditional homiletic cues, its persistently narrative style, and its perceived verbal echoes with poems both within and outside the collection. In a manuscript where poetry and prose are seamlessly interleaved, the focus on Vercelli XXIII offers yet another means by which to map the diversity of the Vercelli prose texts. [Chapter 8](#) draws together the conclusions of all the preceding chapters and turns to a discussion of some of the ways in which the study of the style and rhetoric of Old English prose might both benefit from and, crucially, be of benefit to recent critical approaches to Old English poetry. Both areas are perhaps best seen not as wholly distinct, but rather as shared inheritors of a literary tradition that drew inspiration from both native and imported sources.

As the Vercelli Book poetry and prose together testify, such a skilful amalgamation of resources is precisely what appears to lend the surviving Old English literature its distinctive flavour, providing, as it does, a complex blend of what is old and new, native and imported, secular and Christian, and oral and written. Seen in this light, the Vercelli homilies deserve to be considered as potent echoes of their time. Though we now come to these texts at a far remove from their date of composition, and with an undoubtedly muted appreciation of their hortatory power, we should perhaps heed the inspiring words of another talented preacher who stated: ‘qui habet aures audiendi audiat’ (‘He that

hath ears to hear, let him hear'; Matthew 11:15).

Unless otherwise stated, all biblical quotations are derived from the Douay-Rheims translation of the Vulgate. Translations of Latin and Old English texts are my own, except where differently indicated. I occasionally make minor modifications to Latin and Old English texts, expanding abbreviations and altering punctuation where necessary. I also standardize spellings in Latin editions using medial *u* for *v* and *i* for *j*.

PREACHING THE CONVERTED: THE STYLE AND
RHETORIC OF THE VERCELLI BOOK HOMILIES

1 Locating the Vercelli Homilies: Their Place in the Book, and the Book in Its Place

Description of the Codex

The so-called Vercelli Book (Vercelli, Biblioteca Capitolare CXVII) comprises only 135 folios,¹ and yet it contains one of the most important collections of Old English poetry and anonymous prose that survives.² Since detailed physical descriptions of the manuscript are provided elsewhere, a summary will serve to give an impression of its current condition, and will provide a basis for further comment about the potential use, purpose, and audience for the collection. The manuscript, though rather plain in aspect (at least by comparison with such lavish productions as the Lindisfarne Gospels, or the more contemporary, and possibly closer geographically, Junius manuscript),³ is sizeable in appearance, with its leaves measuring c. 310 × 203 mm (slightly narrower and longer than A4 paper).⁴ The codex remains in good condition, exhibiting on the whole clear writing, though occasional imperfections and damage to the manuscript can be detected with regard to missing leaves (see appendix 2), portions marred by the use of reagent, occasional worm-holes, and intermittent repairs.⁵ The manuscript has otherwise aged well, though ‘the parchment is often yellowish and usually smooth and rather thick, but semi-transparent, so that the writing on the reverse is apt to show through.’⁶ The manuscript’s overall legibility is enhanced by the fact that the leaves are typically generously ruled (see appendix 2 for details), and new items are usually marked by capitals, either in the usual plain black script, or with the occasional zoomorphic initial (occurring in three places at folios 49r, 106v, and 112r).⁷ Beyond such flourishes, ornamentation is scarce: rubrication appears in just those titles for homilies XI–XV, while several other corrections, ‘doodles,’ pen-trials, and marginalia have been noted throughout the codex.⁸ It has been suggested that the plainness of the manuscript together with its manageable size may reflect upon its possible use as a reading book for private devotion.⁹ The volume also

shows several signs of ‘modern’ updating. While the quire signatures are contemporary to the manuscript (though the numbering has been attributed to the copy texts from which the Vercelli scribe worked, rather than to the Vercelli scribe himself), folio numbers are all modern.¹⁰ The codex is still encased in its nineteenth-century calf binding, which was affixed over its medieval boards, certainly while at Vercelli, since the tooling matches that of other manuscripts bound at the cathedral library.¹¹ The binding still contains the title ‘HOMILIARUM LIBER IGNOTI IDIOMATIS’ (‘BOOK OF HOMILIES IN AN UNKNOWN IDIOM’), which serves as a poignant reminder that by the nineteenth century (and perhaps from the time of its arrival in Italy), the Old English portions were perceived as being utterly foreign to the manuscript’s Italian caretakers.¹²

Date of the Manuscript

The manuscript is usually dated broadly to the latter half of the tenth century.¹³ Several criteria have been balanced for arriving at this date, including palaeographical study of the scribe’s hand, the investigation of internal references to supposed current events within the homilies themselves, and the study of sometimes datable features of phonology and dialect (though this method has been more helpful in triangulating a possible place of origin for the manuscript).

It is usually agreed that a single scribe was responsible for the production of the manuscript. Celia Sisam, who provides an early but detailed account of all the letter forms used by the scribe, describes the hand as ‘a stylish and distinctive Anglo-Saxon minuscule of the late tenth century,’ demonstrating that ‘the finish of the strokes, especially the tail of **g** and the broad slanting tops of the ascenders, is characteristic’ of the scribe’s style.¹⁴ Because of its idiosyncratic form, the scribe’s **g** has received particular attention, and has been compared to that used in three charters from disparate locales and points of time in the second half of the tenth century: London, BL, Additional Charter 19792 (dated 969, Winchester), Additional Charter 19794 (dated 984, Worcester), and London, BL, Harley Charter 43 C. 2 (dated 961, Worcester).¹⁵ Beyond these few apparent associations by

handwriting, a Worcester connection for the Vercelli Book has not been endorsed, even though Förster did originally argue for a link between the language of the Vercelli Book and that contained in Wulfgeat's copy of Wulfstan's homilies (in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 113, s. xi², written at Worcester).¹⁶ Further analysis of abbreviations and ornamentation within the Vercelli codex has produced mixed results. It has been argued, for example, that the contraction *xb* - (for X[riste] b[enedic]; marking the scribe's prayer as he sits to write, though possibly also used as a pen-trial to get the ink flowing) was common, though not exclusive, to tenth-century Canterbury manuscripts.¹⁷ Furthermore, the Vercelli Book's major initials (and in particular its use of an ornate capital 'M' on fols. 106v and 112r) have been compared to extant tenth-century Canterbury manuscripts.¹⁸ By contrast, an examination of 'zoomorphic and knot-work initials on f[ols.] 49, 106v and 112' shows features in common with Winchester manuscripts from the same period.¹⁹

Somewhat more controversially, examination of the content of the homilies themselves has opened up still further possibilities for dating. Celia Sisam originally assigned a date after 991 on the basis of the commentary in Vercelli XI.86–99 upon 'the spoliation of churches by the heathen, and by kings, bishops, and ealdormen':²⁰

Dis syndon swares 7 geswines dagas, swa we hit sylfe ongytan magon on þam manigfealdum unieðnessum þe dæghwamlíce on manna cynn fealleð on misgewidrum for manna gewyrhtum. Magon we nu ongitan, men þa leofestan, þætte ure ealra ende swiðe mislice toward nealæceð. Nu syndon þa Godes cyrican bereafode 7 þa wiofeda toworpene þurh hæðenra manna gehresp 7 gestrodu, 7 þa weallas syndon tobrocene 7 toslitene 7 þa godcundan hadas syndon gewanode for hyra sylfra gewyrhtum 7 gearnungum. 7 nalas þæt an Godes þeowas ane syndon, ac eac swylce cuningas 7 bisceopas 7 ealdormen, þa þe ðysse þeode rædboran syndon, hie habbað þa godcundan hadas 7 þæt Godes folc gestroden 7 bereafod for leasum tyhtum 7 lyðrum metsceattum. 7 we þonne nu for ure ealra gewyrhtum þas egeslican þing 7 þas ondrysenlican her on worulde prowigað.

[These are days of oppression and tribulation, as we ourselves may perceive in the manifold torments that daily fall upon mankind in terrible storms on account of the works of men. We may now perceive, dearest people,²¹ that the end of all of us draws towards us in very different ways. Now are the churches of God robbed and the altars cast down through the plundering

and looting of heathen men, and the walls are utterly broken and divided and the divine orders are diminished on account of their own deeds and deserts. And not only are they God's servants alone, but (they are) also kings, and bishops, and aldormen, those who are the council-bearers to this people, who have robbed and plundered those divine orders and the people of God on account of false charges and corrupt bribes. And therefore now, on account of all of our works, we suffer these terrible and dreadful things here in the world.]

Sisam attributes the violence described in the passage to the period of renewed Viking attacks upon England in 980, arguing that the accounts of pillaging and destruction of the churches from within, both by royalty and clergy, might plausibly correspond to events recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. The entry for the year 986, for example, tells of 'the destruction by King Æthelred of the bishopric of Rochester,' an outcome prefaced by 'the troubled period after Edgar's death in 975, [when] ealdormen were accused of destroying the monasteries, for instance Ælfhere of Mercia.'²² Since Æthelred was but a child when he succeeded to the throne, Sisam postpones the target date to at least 991 (and perhaps as late as 'the first years of the eleventh-century'), when Æthelred had 'come of age' and when (as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for that year makes plain) the payment of Danegeld was begun, a process that slowly and deeply bled the resources of the church.²³

The authenticity of this passage has been questioned by some. Donald G. Scragg (the most recent editor of the Vercelli Book homilies), for example, highlights the passage's rhetorically enhanced references to Doomsday, arguing that the destruction and general malaise described there need not correspond to an 'actual event.'²⁴ Charles D. Wright, however, re-examining the political climate in the immediate wake of the Benedictine Reform, has since revived the theory that the account may present a genuine reaction to current events.²⁵ Wright, however, places the date in question to a period earlier within Edgar's reign, since Sisam's proposed time frame falls at the outer limit of the dates determined by palaeographical evidence.²⁶ Though the combination of these various approaches suggests a date beginning at the second half of the tenth century, as we shall see below, Wright's inferences concerning the type of anti-reform sentiment he detects in Vercelli XI–XIII and again in XV has much

to recommend it on a broader scale as a means of localizing one potential set of audiences for the Vercelli Book.²⁷ Scragg likewise looks to the early reign of Edgar as a starting point for dating the manuscript, though (for reasons that will be explained shortly) he places the manuscript more narrowly within the years 959–88, during the later years of Dunstan’s pontificate. Scragg’s chronology, however, has not been unanimously accepted. David N. Dumville, bringing to bear his own palaeo-graphic study of the Vercelli Book, has classified the Vercelli manuscript as containing Canonical Square Minuscule, Phase II, which would seem to suggest a dating no later than 975.²⁸ Dumville therefore states that he is ‘not at all clear why, between 1957 and 1976, Ker’s date of “x²” (Catalogue, pp. 460–4 (no. 394)) came to be subverted.’²⁹

The additional question as to whether the compilation of the Vercelli Book can be placed within the period of the Benedictine Reform has likewise proved difficult to answer, partially because reformist activity spread incrementally throughout England, and also partly because the place of origin for the Vercelli Book is still insecure. In a recent study, Elaine Treharne has come back to the argument that the Vercelli Book ‘is a product of the early Benedictine Reform era, if not the movement itself,’³⁰ citing Mechthild Gretsch’s placement of the roots of the Reform in the latter part of the first half of the tenth century.³¹ Gretsch’s broad formulation of the Reform period permits us to search generally for Benedictine prejudices in the manuscript, even if the manuscript itself cannot be said securely to have been produced in the full flowering of the Reform period itself.³²

Origin

The precise origin of the Vercelli Book is still under dispute, though substantive strides have been made towards answering this question in the half-century since Neil Ker wrote his 1957 entry for the manuscript in his monumental *Catalogue*, leaving the place of origin blank. One area of inquiry has been to imagine the type of institution responsible for the production of the Vercelli Book. In assessing the relatively unadorned and simple appearance of the manuscript, Celia Sisam conjectured that the

manuscript was likely not ‘the product of a great monastery, with flourishing scriptorium, trained scribes and a large library,’ and that it would be more prudent to ‘look to a small house, perhaps a nunnery, where an English Book was needed for private reading.’³³ Most scholars, however, follow Scragg, who in several landmark studies proposed a Kentish origin for the manuscript. Over the years, and through the study of dialectal forms within the manuscript and later copies of texts witnessed in the Vercelli Book, Scragg has further localized the manuscript to St Augustine’s, proposing that it originated ‘in Canterbury in the latter part of Dunstan’s pontificate (959–88).’³⁴ Though Scragg’s assessment has been widely accepted, a few scholars continue to look to other Kentish houses. George Krapp and Margaret Martin (in studies that pre-date Scragg’s edition) had both proposed Rochester as a possible place of origin, and it is apparent from Helmut Gneuss’s recent and authoritative 2002 *Handlist* that he considers both Rochester and St Augustine’s to remain possibilities. In what follows, I offer a brief overview of some of these perspectives.

As Sisam and Scragg have shown, linguistic data has proved especially resistant to quantification, primarily because the language and spelling in the Vercelli Book apparently shows a complicated patchwork of influences. Though the majority of spellings appear to be representative of ‘conservative late West Saxon,’³⁵ other forms have evidently been preserved from exemplars originating from disparate regions.³⁶ Scragg’s study of the distribution of *-io-* and *-eo-* forms across the codex, for example, shows a concentration by exemplar, and this has proved essential in identifying stints where the Vercelli scribe likely turned from one exemplar to another in his copying.³⁷ Scragg elsewhere presents a list of spellings and inflexions uncommon in the Vercelli Book and generally in late West-Saxon (especially those suggestive of early West-Saxon, Mercian, and Kentish), concluding that even where he finds Kentish forms (the presumed dialect of the scribe), it is difficult to justify these as having been introduced by the scribe, since the library from which these materials derived were likely also south-eastern.

So far, the three clearest groupings by exemplar in the Vercelli Book have been identified as follows (see appendix 2): Vercelli

VI–X, from a south-eastern collection dating to the second half of the tenth century; XI–XIV, from an exemplar of unknown provenance; XV–XVIII, from a Mercian collection; and XIX–XXI, from a late West-Saxon exemplar.³⁸ While some of the variant forms in these groupings have apparently been standardized by the scribe (either intentionally or not), a great many dialectal features are retained, though this evidence reflects insufficiently upon the extent to which the homilies in the Vercelli manuscript derive from their exemplars.³⁹ Mistakes and corrections made to the text by the scribe himself are also difficult to assess, as it is unclear at times whether the scribe corrected from his exemplar or according to his own dialect or preference. The only recurring error that Scragg uniformly assigns to the Vercelli scribe is in his transcription of Latin passages, asserting that the scribe cannot have had a very sound knowledge of the language.⁴⁰ Though the broad categorization Late West-Saxon can most comfortably (and unsurprisingly) be assigned to the language of the Vercelli scribe, further classification must await continued analysis, such as that begun recently by Scragg in his assessment of late West-Saxon features prevalent in those manuscripts containing copies of items shared by the Vercelli Book.⁴¹

A further promising line of enquiry has been offered by study of later manuscripts traceable to the south-eastern region, and especially Canterbury and Rochester, that contain variant versions of the Vercelli Homilies.⁴² Scragg over the years has provided several comprehensive overviews of these manuscripts.⁴³ The possibilities and problems of such an approach are perhaps obvious: while a study of those later extant manuscripts containing items in common with the Vercelli Book may point to a relatively small number of libraries likely to have housed materials appearing in these collections, we are of course limited by what has survived. To date, Scragg has identified no fewer than twenty-six manuscripts that contain texts in common with the Vercelli Book, though none has been shown to derive directly from the Vercelli Book itself. Of this total, Scragg isolates three that potentially stand to tell us the most about the immediate afterlife of the Vercelli texts, since they ‘are all closely related textually, and can be localised with reasonable precision,’ and furthermore ‘they all derive their *Ælfric CH I* and *II* items from the copy sent by the author to Archbishop Sigeric of

Canterbury.⁴⁴ The double placement of these manuscripts in Canterbury (though their exact place of origin is difficult to pinpoint) and of Sigeric himself, who was elected Abbot of St Augustine's in 980, has undoubtedly been a key factor in Scragg's assignment of these manuscripts to St Augustine's. The manuscripts in question (using Scragg's *sigla* for easy comparison) are Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 340/342 (MS E, s. xi in, with additions s. xi¹ and xi med.; containing copies of Vercelli I, III, V, VIII, and IX), CCC 198 (MS F, s. xi¹, with additions xi²; containing copies of Vercelli I, III, V, and VIII), CCC 162 (MS G, s. x ex. or xi in; containing copies of Vercelli I, III, XIX and XX),⁴⁵ all of which Scragg has suggested were compiled from the same antecedent exemplar in Canterbury.⁴⁶ The intersection of materials between these manuscripts and the Vercelli Book appears even more impressive when it is considered that the homilies common to the Vercelli Book are sampled widely across the collection, at least in their present order. As Scragg notes (see appendix 2), E draws from Vercelli groupings A, B1, and B2, as does F, while G draws from A and B4b.⁴⁷ Or, to put it another way (if the Vercelli manuscript can be so dissected according to a proposed exemplar), all but Scragg's groupings B3 (containing just the poem *The Dream of the Rood*)⁴⁸ and the free-standing grouping C (containing just *Elene* and Homily XXIII) are represented in these later manuscripts. Since Scragg has argued that none of the extant manuscript witnesses exhibit direct links to the Vercelli manuscript itself, he concludes that the exemplars for just those homilies common to the Vercelli Book and manuscripts EFG must have circulated independently in the Kentish area, presumably in scriptoria associated with that in which the Vercelli Book was assembled.⁴⁹

Scragg's conclusions are alluring, because they suggest that the library that housed these exemplars, as consulted by both the Vercelli scribe and those of EFG, were one and the same. But given the extensiveness of these textual overlappings, it may be worth speculating whether a complete (or nearly complete) copy of the Vercelli Book, bearing some of the variants, omissions, and changes that have been noted in EFG, could have been available in Canterbury, and to the compilers of EFG. Though as Scragg meticulously notes, textual differences can be identified between EFG and the Vercelli Book, given that scribes seem commonly to

introduce such differences in copying there is nothing obviously in his written assessment that would preclude the wider availability of just such a Vercelli-based anthology, perhaps with minor variants.⁵⁰ As Scragg notes of the E -type homiliary (so named because Scragg's manuscript E represents the earliest witness to the antecedent homiliary upon which Scragg's manuscripts **FGHIN** all drew): 'it is possible that the same redactor is responsible for all these changes' and that 'none of the differences suggest that E or its exemplar had access to a better copy of the homilies found in [the Vercelli Book] than the scribe of [the Vercelli Book] had (except in minor details which prove that E did not draw directly on [the Vercelli Book]).'⁵¹ The closeness of these manuscripts is precisely what demands still further inquiry.⁵²

The idea of an anthology behind manuscripts **EFG** perhaps finds a parallel in the methods employed by the pseudo-Wulfstan homilist of Napier XXX, where (as Scragg himself has so vividly shown) the author draws upon Vercelli homilies IV, IX, X, and XXI in a scissor-and-paste fashion together with extracts from genuine Wulfstan material.⁵³ Though it is not known where the pseudo-Wulfstan author was working, at least two possibilities have been suggested: either in the south-east, where the Vercelli Book is thought to have been compiled, or in Worcester, where Napier XXX was included (and now survives as a unique copy) in the collection now known as Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 113 (which is dated to the middle of the second half of the eleventh century).⁵⁴ Forty years ago, in his initial study of the Napier homily, Scragg concluded that the *mélange* of texts behind Napier XXX common to the Vercelli Book suggests that the author 'had before him in the second quarter of the eleventh-century, an anthology very close indeed to the Vercelli Book.'⁵⁵ Though the practices to which Scragg refers here are 'authorial' rather than 'scribal,' it may be that a similar conclusion regarding the use of a single antecedent anthology need not be dismissed outright for manuscripts **EFG** described above. Certainly it seems from the evidence of later scribal notations in the Vercelli Book, apparently at places where the text requires augmentation, that the Vercelli Book was indeed used as an exemplar.⁵⁶ What this alternative reading of Scragg's evidence calls into question, then, is not his expert assessment of the links between manuscripts, or

even the closeness of their borrowing, but rather (perhaps) the ability to isolate a single library within which the Vercelli Book was produced.

But is there a counter-argument in favour of Rochester as the place of origin for the Vercelli Book? Scragg has remarked that ‘superficial’ evidence points to Rochester, though he has substantive grounds for discounting this theory.⁵⁷ As Scragg points out, one tenuous connection with Rochester derives from the inclusion of materials relating to St Andrew in the Vercelli Book and in manuscript E.⁵⁸ In the Vercelli Book we find the following ‘homages’ to the saint: the poem *Andreas* tells of the saint’s experiences in Mermedonia, while the shorter Cynewulfian *Fates of the Apostles* contains a section on his martyrdom. There can also be found among the marginalia in the Vercelli Book a lesser well-known notation that may contain the first two words from the incipit of the Second Vespers’ *Magnificat* antiphon for the Feast of St Andrew, set for 30 November.⁵⁹ This phrase, *CUM PERVENISSE[T]*, written in capitals now appears upside-down among a series of pen-trials on the otherwise blank folio 136r at the end of the Vercelli Book. Though on its own the scribble appears insignificant, Neil Ker discovered that by aligning the wormholes in the Vercelli Book (and by turning the page right-side up), the leaf containing the antiphon can be shown to have originally served as one of the opening pages in the Vercelli Book.⁶⁰ Margaret Martin, building on Ker’s finding, further speculates whether the antiphon could have been added as a kind of introduction to the collection as a whole, perhaps serving to alert its readers (whether in Anglo-Saxon England, or abroad in Italy) to the enclosed Andrean material. The deeper cultural ‘resonance’ of the antiphon is perhaps highlighted by the fact that the prayer was well known in the Anglo-Saxon period, as it was adapted closely by Ælfric in his Homily on St Andrew, and has been cited as a source for the poem *The Dream of the Rood* (especially lines 33–41), also contained in the Vercelli Book.⁶¹

The most indirect connection between the Vercelli Book and Rochester therefore lies in the circumstance (as Scragg again records) that Rochester Cathedral Library was itself dedicated to St Andrew, and had held that affiliation since 604, though the foundation did not flourish continuously throughout the Anglo-

Saxon period.⁶² But it is also noteworthy that several of the later manuscripts containing copies of items in the Vercelli Book can also be placed in Rochester in the eleventh century, most notably Scragg's manuscript E. In addition to the basic group of Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies* common to the E -type homiliary,⁶³ appended to the end of E, in a final two new quires, are three items written 'in a different, but roughly contemporary hand as compared with that of the main scribe of the two volumes.'⁶⁴ The items include two Ælfrician homilies for the feast of St Andrew, together with an account of Paulinus, the first bishop of Rochester, which uses the locator *her* ('here') to refer to the place where the bishop 'was invested and buried.'⁶⁵ This internal evidence shows that manuscript E was in Rochester by the eleventh century, and perhaps also originated there, though the latter estimation is less secure.⁶⁶ But as Scragg has also cautioned, the difficulty in placing these manuscripts stems from the fact that Rochester Cathedral Priory, a relatively poor foundation in the pre-conquest era, was in the eleventh century stocked with manuscripts from other more well-endowed foundations, with a primary source having been Christ Church, Canterbury.⁶⁷ To complicate matters, Christ Church was in turn supplied with books from St Augustine's about the time when EG were produced, though there is no way to know at present whether these particular manuscripts were affected.⁶⁸ This filtering of books makes it difficult (beyond the evidence of mostly late book catalogues) to distinguish between items produced at Rochester and at other Kentish monasteries. Scragg therefore speculates that E (not counting the additional quires added at Rochester) and G had their origins at Canterbury, and probably St Augustine's, showing that EG 'have been linked by script and decoration to St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury and G contains part of a homily on Augustine of Canterbury.'⁶⁹

However, a few minor qualifications can perhaps now be offered in response to Scragg. For example, David Dumville has raised doubts about the Vercelli Book's placement at St Augustine's on palaeographic grounds. In comparing the square minuscule employed in the Vercelli Book with contemporary manuscripts known to have derived from St Augustine's, Dumville concludes that the sample in the Vercelli Book appears to be of 'rather different character,' though he finds one possible

comparandum in the tenth-century St Augustine manuscript CCC 352.⁷⁰ Likewise, in assessing Scragg's textual and linguistic evidence for placing the Vercelli Book at St Augustine's, Dumville concludes that 'Scragg's case for an origin at St Augustine's is decidedly circumstantial: one might think that at least as good a claim is held by Rochester cathedral.'⁷¹

Additional considerations may also arise from the analysis of those manuscripts derived from the E -type homiliary that almost certainly originated outside of St Augustine's. One late manuscript can be found in CCC 303 (s. xii¹; Scragg's manuscript **H**), containing sixty-one items attributed to Ælfric, together with twelve anonymous items from the tenth and eleventh centuries.⁷² Among this latter group of texts are copies of Vercelli items XIX and XX (written in CCC 303 in sequence, on pp. 215–19 and 219–23), possibly derived from **G** itself,⁷³ as well as the text corresponding to Vercelli IX.144–216 (written on a single page in CCC 303, p. 202). The sole scribe responsible for this portion of **H** may have also had access to a text or extract from Vercelli XIV,⁷⁴ since he inserted two sentences from this text (witnessed in Vercelli XIV.17–23) into his own copy of the text of Vercelli IX.⁷⁵ It is mildly interesting that apart from these two sentences, the text of Vercelli XIV does not survive in any other version outside of the Vercelli Book, suggesting that at least one Vercelli-related text was available from outside the E -type homiliary to the scribe at Rochester. The scribe of **H** also included a variant version of Vercelli I, which is derived from the version preserved in **EFG** rather than from that in the Vercelli Book itself (likewise using the E -type homiliary for some of Ælfric's homilies), which shows that some such exemplar was available directly to the copyist.⁷⁶ While the origin of **H** in Rochester is generally accepted (since it bears trademark palaeographical and dedicatory features),⁷⁷ as is its textual derivation from **EFG**, it is difficult to work backwards from this late manuscript's witness to illuminate the origins of its exemplars. All that can be confirmed is that the antecedent texts used by the compiler of **H** were at Rochester at the time of that manuscript's compilation.

Though a link between the Vercelli Book itself and Rochester must remain hypothetical, it is possible to imagine the potential use a collection like it (or even a copy of it) may have had at a

smaller institution like Rochester, perhaps even (one might speculate) because of the preponderance of catechetical and penitential materials contained in the collection. In assessing the state of the library at Rochester in the pre-reform period, Mary Richards concludes that ‘unlike its neighbor Christ Church, Canterbury, the Anglo-Saxon foundation at Rochester lacked direct involvement in events associated with the Benedictine Revival and never became a comparable centre of learning.’⁷⁸ If, as we shall see below (following the argument put forward by Charles D. Wright), the Vercelli Book can be shown, in places, at least, to manifest an ‘anti-reformist’ (or even more neutrally, a ‘non-reformist’) spirit, and to accommodate a lifestyle more in fashion with the interests of secular clerics, it would not be surprising that this type of manuscript could find a more receptive audience in a place like Rochester, in the company of such manuscripts as EG, which arguably were useful both for the laity and for ‘unlearned canons in their own services.’⁷⁹ This connection remains an intriguing possibility whether these later manuscripts originated in Rochester or they were brought there later for just such a practical use.

Directions for future scholarship on the question of the Vercelli Book’s origin are easily articulated, though certainly less easily executed. Since Scragg has so fully mined the evidence of the later manuscripts, one area that promises to shed further light on the origin and intellectual milieu that produced the Vercelli Book lies in source-study, both with regard to the circulation of individual sources known to have been consulted by the Vercelli homilists, and in terms of collections known to have been used on a wider scale by these authors. One often discussed case in point is the so-called St Père de Chartres collection, a Carolingian homiliary best witnessed in the eleventh-century Cambridge, Pembroke 25. Though there are no surviving witnesses that pre-date the Vercelli Book, an earlier version of the collection appears to have served as a certain source for no fewer than four Vercelli homilies (III, XIX, XX, and XXI), and a possible or indirect source for four more (V, VI, IX, XI).⁸⁰ It is also clear that still further sources listed for the Vercelli homilies were in fact mediated by this same Pembroke 25 type of homiliary. Paul E. Szarmach and James E. Cross have demonstrated that while Vercelli XIX and XX draw upon portions of Caesarius of Arles’s *sermo* 207, this

material was in fact adapted from a version of item 38 in the Pembroke 25 collection, rather than from a fuller collection of Caesarius's sermons.⁸¹ If we follow this line of thought, another less transparent area of influence potentially stems from the so-called *Catechesis Celtica*, which again unfortunately only survives in a single manuscript, in Rome, Vatican Library, Reg. lat. 49, dated by Cross to s. ix or x and Wright to s. x^{ex}, of unknown origin, but of possible provenance in Brittany. Items in this collection served as a certain source for Vercelli V, and also possibly for Vercelli IV, VI, and IX.⁸² Though the quantifiable influence seems meager, it is perhaps significant that the *Catechesis Celtica* also served as a definite source for a host of items in the Pembroke 25 homiliary (since Pembroke items 26 and 27 use four items from the *Catechesis Celtica*, and Pembroke item 29 is a variant of the *Catechesis Celtica* item 18).⁸³ What begins to emerge against this murky background of tangled connections is a series of loose, but potentially revealing, chains of influence that, should we be lucky enough to identify them more fully, might substantially enrich our understanding of the place of the Vercelli Book's compilation.

Location in Vercelli

Since the first published reference to the Vercelli Book appeared in 1824,⁸⁴ there has been considerable debate as to how and when the Vercelli Book made its way to Italy.⁸⁵ The only physical evidence we have for the date of the manuscript's arrival in Italy derives from a series of marginalia, written in various eleventh-century hands, and on several folios of the manuscript.⁸⁶ The most important in this respect is the inscribed and neumed verse from Psalm 26.9 ('R Adiutor meus esto domine ne derelinquas me dues salutaris meus V'), which has been claimed to display an identifiably northern Italian character,⁸⁷ written on the otherwise blank bottom portion of folio 24v in what has been described as a late eleventh-century hand. The presence of this unusual inscription has been cited as evidence that the manuscript was already in Italy by the end of the eleventh century.⁸⁸ But the fact of the inscription has interested scholars more than its contents, and it is only recently that scholars have viewed this jotting as providing a potential window into the mindset of a particular

reader of the manuscript. Kenneth Sisam originally argued that the placement of the quotation had to do with the fact that it appears on the first sizeable blank space in the manuscript; this assessment, I think, is misguided, since fol. 16r also has a large blank space, with room enough for just such an inscription. More convincing is Éamonn Ó Carragáin's argument that there is a connection between the psalm-verse cited and the content of the surrounding homilies.⁸⁹ As Ó Carragáin hypothesizes, the 'Adiutor meus esto domine' may have been included as a place-marker to remind the reader of the upcoming incipit for Homily V from Psalm 84.8 ('Ostende nobis domine'), which begins with a similar plea for help from God. Ó Carragáin likewise postulates that the verse was intended to bridge the injunction at the end of the preceding Vercelli IV, which recommends the fortification of the soul from the arrows of the devil using divine aid and prayer, though this proposition relies upon this 'commentator's' understanding of the Old English. At the very least, the apparently apposite placement of the addition seems to indicate that someone at this late date had read through part of the manuscript (however briefly) and had understood at least part of its content.

Concerning the earliest date for the manuscript's exportation, Kenneth Sisam has argued that the manuscript did not leave England before the early part of the eleventh century. His evidence turns on the interpolation of the words *writ þus* at the bottom of folios 63v and 135v (the last written page of the manuscript), written in what he categorizes as a 'pointed eleventh-century hand' still using Anglo-Saxon minuscule.⁹⁰ It is significant that the jotting appears as an imperative, meaning 'write in this way'; indeed, there are several similar scribbles that survive from Anglo-Saxon England, all apparently marking directions for other scribes to follow (including threats of physical punishment for inaccurately doing so!).⁹¹ Although Scragg has found no evidence that the Vercelli Book was used directly by the scribe of any extant manuscript, it seems likely that a later copyist was responsible for these cues, providing clear evidence that the Vercelli Book did indeed serve as an exemplar. Especially illuminating in this regard is the example of this inscription at the very bottom left-hand corner of fol. 63v, midway through the sentence at Vercelli IX.125, which comes

precisely at the moment in Vercelli IX where a lacuna occurs in the manuscript, and a folio is lost containing what has been recognized as the 'hanging-sinner motif,' known primarily from variants in *Beowulf* 1357b–76a, 1408–11, and 1414–17a, and Blickling XVI.⁹² One might speculate that if a later copyist is indeed responsible for the notation *writ þus*, he or she intended to supply the missing portion of the text from another source, even though no surviving copies of this particular homily have been directly linked to the Vercelli text.⁹³ That the notation is late seems to be supported by the one other legible occurrence of the notation at 135v, which comes on the last folio of the Vercelli Book, at the very end of the final homily on Guthlac (Vercelli XXIII), where again it can be surmised perhaps that a copyist (it is now impossible to see whether it is the same hand as that on 63v) has marked the end of his copy-text.⁹⁴

But with such scant textual evidence available, one is reduced to speculation as to how the book actually came to Vercelli, and from there eventually into the Cathedral library under the care of the canons of St Eusebius. The most feasible explanation remains that the manuscript was left in Vercelli by a traveller with connections to England (presumably a pilgrim of some rank), who was travelling through Vercelli, either to or from Rome. The fact that Vercelli was throughout the early Middle Ages a major stopping point (and certainly the most popular and direct land route) for *Romipetae* ('pilgrims to Rome') certainly makes this an attractive proposition.⁹⁵ It is clear that for pilgrims crossing the Alps, the two major routes over Mont Cenis (and on to Susa and then Vercelli) and over the Great St Bernard pass (then through Aosta and Ivrea) both convened in Vercelli. Several notable travellers from England certainly took this route, including Sigeric, archbishop of Canterbury, when he obtained the pallium from Pope John XV in 990,⁹⁶ and others on royal missions, such as Bishops Herman and Ealdred, who traveled together with the author Goscelin in 1050, and King Cnut himself, who on a journey with Bishop Lyfing of Crediton in 1027 wrote a letter campaigning against the pricey tolls levied on English travellers.⁹⁷ Such heavy traffic through Vercelli leaves open any number of scenarios concerning the identity of the bearer of the Vercelli Book.

Further attempts to identify the exporter of the manuscript with a known event or person remain generally improbable.⁹⁸ In some ways, the more intriguing question is why the manuscript survived once it made its way to Vercelli. While it has always been assumed that a monastic or religious community in Italy would have had no practical use for an Old English manuscript, especially in the eleventh century, it nevertheless is surprising that the manuscript did not suffer the fate of dismemberment that so many other foreign manuscripts endured as they came through Italy, to be used as a binding for 'more important' Latin and Italian collections. One possibility is that the initial traveller bearing the manuscript may have intended to make his or her way to the Anglo-Saxon *schola* in Rome, which according to different sources was founded either by King Ine of Wessex (who died in Rome in 726) or by King Offa of Mercia (757–96),⁹⁹ and which appears to have remained in existence (despite two fires) at least into the twelfth century, and possibly later.¹⁰⁰ Such an expatriate community must have been in need of devotional books, and possibly in their own vernacular, since it was not just religious who made pilgrimages to Rome, but also, as Bede himself wrote, 'nobles and common, layfolk and clergy, men and women.'¹⁰¹ Though a stay at the *schola* itself was not inevitable, it is known that several English travellers sojourned there (and on occasion even died there): for example Archbishop Sigeric, whose pilgrim-diary reveals that this was the second stop he made in Rome in 990, and perhaps even served as his home base as he travelled through the city.¹⁰² Though it remains unknown whether those *in situ* ever had with them expensive English manuscripts,¹⁰³ it is nevertheless helpful to imagine that the Vercelli Book may have been brought over for the edification of a thriving expatriate community of Anglo-Saxons, rather than (as is usually presumed) as an accident in which the manuscript was left within a community for which the manuscript would have had less immediate practical value.¹⁰⁴ Such a turn of events might offer one explanation as to why a pilgrim may have been carrying a book of such value, especially given the stringent proscriptions against travelling with wealth, both from an idealized apostolic standpoint (which frowned upon the conveyance of riches while on a *peregrinatio*), and also more practically because of the frequency of robberies on

Moreover, while the ‘unreadability’ of the manuscript has been cited on the grounds that the current binding of the Vercelli Book declares it to be written in an ‘unknowable idiom’ (even though the same binding correctly identifies the book as belonging to the tenth century), further evidence gleaned from book catalogues produced at the cathedral library well beyond the late medieval period (and at a time when Old English was clearly a dead language) may indicate that some of the general contents were nevertheless intelligible with willing scrutiny. For example, a 1426 catalogue, which has been thought to describe the Vercelli Book, seems correctly to identify this manuscript as an ‘Item liber omeliarius antiquissimus non habens principium nec finem, et aliquantulum dequaternatus, cum asseribus aliquantulum a libro remotis, scriptus in carta’ (‘Item: a very ancient book of homilies lacking both a beginning and end, and to some extent disbound, with the bindings somewhat removed, written on parchment’).¹⁰⁶ Even more impressive is the extremely detailed catalogue from the eighteenth century, which wrongly identifies the book as a ‘Homiliarium per anni circulum contineri’ (‘Homiliary for the cycle of the year’), but which gets many of its other details right. This catalogue entry is cited here in full (following Maureen Halsall’s transcription):¹⁰⁷

CXVII 42/ Codex membran. In fol. saec. IX vel X. nitide et distincte exscriptus Saxonico characterē. De eo specimen damus, ut de idiomate etiam iudicent eruditi. Theotisco idiomate conscriptum esse conijcimus: verum otium nobis non fuit rem penitus considerare. Occurrunt passim breves quidam Sacrae Scripturae textus, qui latino sermone relati sunt: idem tamen character ubique occurrit. Scimus doctos viros affirmasse *Homiliarium per anni circulum contineri*. Et a medio codice usque in finem Homelias fuisse descriptas ex latinis quibusdam inscriptionibus tuto cognoscimus, quae huiusmodi sunt. *Alia Homelia de Die iudicii. Omelia Epiphania Domini. De Purificatione Sca Maria. De Sco Martino Conf.* Sed in prima codicis parte nullus titulus, nullave inscriptio reperitur. Initio affirmari potest sermonem fieri de passione Domini; frequenter enim memoratur *Petrus, Pilatus, Johannes, Crist*. Occurrunt etiam *Iudas, Golgotha* : tum Evangeliorum Testimonia quae ad passionem pertinet. Ex. C. *Si male locutus sum. Pilatus thoim* [sic].¹⁰⁸ Ergo es tu Rex. *Pilatus to Iudeum. Ecce homo. Ecce mater. Sitio. In siti meo potaverunt me.* Atque haec in decem primis libri foliis. Sequuntur ea, quae in specimine characterum exhibentur. Inde circa tertiam Codicis partem, nempe fol. 54. haec habetur inscriptio: *Incipit narrare miracula quae facta fuerant ante Adventum Salvatoris Dni nostri Iesu Christi*. In primo codicis folio litterae ita deletae, ac abrasae sunt, ut nullo modo legi possint.

Postrema folia paullo negligentius exscripta videntur. Caetera nitidissima sunt.

[CXVII 42/ Parchment codex, in folio. Ninth or tenth century. Written clearly and fairly in a Saxon script. We give a specimen of it, so that the learned may judge its idiom. We reckon it to be written in a Germanic idiom, but we really do not have the time to pursue the matter further. Throughout, there are some short passages of Sacred Scripture, which are written in the Latin language: but the same script runs all the way through. We know that learned men have called it a 'Homiliary for the cycle of the year.' We surely know that from the middle of the codex through to the end the homilies are given certain Latin titles, of this kind: *Alia Homelia de Die iudicii. Omelia Epiffania Domini. De Purificatione Sca Maria. De Sco Martino Conf.* But in the first part of the codex no title or ascription is given. At the beginning, one can see that there must be a sermon on the Passion of our Lord, because there is frequent mention of *Petrus, Pilatus, Johannes, Crist.* There also appear *Iudas, Golgotha*, then passages from the gospels that relate to the Passion, including: *Si male locutus sum. Pilatus thoim. Ergo es tu Rex. Pilatus to Iudeum. Ecce homo. Ecce mater. Sitio. In siti meo potaverunt me.* These appear in the first ten folios. There follow those items which are in the manner of the script. Then around a third of the way through (at fol. 54), this inscription appears: *Incipit narrare miracula. Quae facta fuerant ante Adventum Salvatoris Dni nostri Iesu Christi.* On the first folio of the codex some letters are deleted, which is to say erased, so that they cannot be read in any way. The final folios seem to have been written rather carelessly. The rest are very fine.]

The striking feature of this catalogue is just how much of the content the reader was able to identify according to its liturgical function: the title *Alia Homelia de Die iudicii* is taken from Vercelli XV (though the spelling is changed from manuscript), *Omelia Epiffania Domini* (from Vercelli XVI, though again the spelling is altered), *De Purificatione Sancta Maria* (from Vercelli XVII), *De Sancto Martino Confessore* (from Vercelli XVIII), and *Incipit narrare miracula, quae facta fuerant ante Adventum Salvatoris Domini nostri Iesu Christi* (from Vercelli VI). The wording also makes clear that the list is offered only as a sampling of what the reader was able to make out.

The selectivity of the catalogue is evident not only because the manuscript contains far more Latin references than are recorded here, but also because the cataloguer has clearly only spot-checked the homilies, so that the references taken from Latin words found within homilies almost exclusively derive from Homily I (the cataloguer mentions correctly that these are all to be found on the first ten folios): *si male locutus sum* (Vercelli I.90;

fol. 3r4); *ergo es tu rex* (Vercelli I.125; fol. 5r6), *Pilatus to Iudeum ecce homo* (Vercelli I.161–2; fol. 6r1; the Old English form *to Iudeum* is especially noteworthy); *ecce mater* (Vercelli I. 232; fol. 7v15–16) *sitio* (Vercelli I.242; fol. 8r3), and *in siti meo potaverunt me* (Vercelli I.245; fol. 8r8). In addition to these identifications, it is perhaps worth pointing out that among the proper names cited for their frequency in the Latin, the cataloguer was able to make out (again, in the first ten folios) *Golgoðða*, spelled using ‘eths,’ (Vercelli I.204; fol. 7r5) showing the ability to recognize or guess at non-Latinate characters. It might also be noted that the long Latin rubric mentioned here as being on fol. 54 (in fact, the top of fol. 54v) is at present partially obscured by the defacing reagent apparently used on the runic signature of Cynewulf at the end of *Fates of the Apostles*, which ends six lines short of the bottom of fol. 54r; here, at least, our eighteenth-century cataloguer had the advantage over twenty-first-century scholars.

Although it is certainly conspicuous that none of the poems are referenced in this catalogue (perhaps for the obvious reason that they do not contain many Latin phrases, and do not begin until folio 29v), it is not inconceivable that a careful trawl through the manuscript, even looking solely at lines containing initials, would have yielded some recognizable forms.¹⁰⁹ But whatever the reason for taking the Vercelli Book to Italy, the fact of its survival suggests that it was felt to be a book of some importance, and the few notations traceable to its locale in exile suggest that it was not always collecting dust on the shelves.

2 Reinventing the Past: Originality and the Vercelli Homilies

Contents

Since the ensuing chapters discuss the contents of the manuscript in degrees of detail, a short summary is offered here. The collection itself contains six religious poems that are interspersed between twenty-three prose pieces. The poems contained in the manuscript are as follows: *Andreas* (fols. 29v–52v), *Fates of the Apostles* (fols. 52v–54r), *Soul and Body I* (fols. 101v–103v), *Homiletic Fragment I* (fol. 104rv), *Dream of the Rood* (fols. 104v–106r), and *Elene* (fols. 121r–133v). This assortment of verse is remarkable for several reasons. As possibly the earliest extant collection of vernacular poetry, the Vercelli poems are an important witness to Old English language and literature in the second half of the tenth century, at a time when the other three major codices of extant Old English poetry had yet to be written.¹ The collection also contains two of the four extant poems signed by Cynewulf (*Fates of the Apostles* and *Elene*), as well as at least two other poems that have been designated ‘Cynewulfian’ in style, namely *Andreas* and *Dream of the Rood*.² All the poems may be said to contain homiletic features, and as such make fitting companion-pieces for the largely homiletic prose texts.³

The prose works themselves have generally been seen to fall into two main categories: homilies and saints’ lives. Though the collection does not systematically follow the liturgical calendar, several homilies appear to be set for the temporal cycle (see appendix 1 for more detail). Vercelli items containing titles to this effect include V and VI for Christmas, XI–XIII for the days of Rogationtide, XVI for the Epiphany, and XVII for the Purification. For some of the homilies the liturgical purpose is less clear, but perhaps can be guessed at either on the basis of clues provided within the homilies themselves, or else by comparison with the layout or title of the same item in other manuscripts. So, for example, Homily I (which is acephalous in the Vercelli Book) is set for Good Friday, Homily III is probably designated for the Second Sunday in Lent, VIII for the First Sunday after Epiphany, IX for the Second Sunday after Epiphany, X (though this is less

certain) for the Tuesday in Rogationtide, and the sequence XIX–XXI for the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday in Rogationtide.⁴ Texts XVIII and XXIII, on the lives of St Martin and St Guthlac (respectively) may loosely be termed saints' lives, and possibly correspond to the appropriate feast days for the saints (celebrated on 11 November and 11 April respectively).⁵ The remaining homilies (II, IV, VII, XIV, XV, and XXII) present general sermons that deal variously with penitential and Judgment Day themes. While the homilies that correspond to feast days other than Rogationtide may broadly be classified as exegetical, only Vercelli XVII for the Purification approaches the inclusion of a full gospel pericope.⁶ Likewise, the term saint's life applies only in the broadest possible terms for Vercelli XXIII on the life of Guthlac, which may in fact be better classified as a narrative piece, similar in genre to Vercelli I.⁷

It is largely on the basis of the collection's non-conformity to the liturgical calendar, its high incidence of catechetical homilies, its inclusion of multiple homilies for the same feast or liturgical period, and its intercalation of poetry that the collection has been felt to be *sui generis*. Such was the opinion of Milton Gatch,⁸ most recently supported by Mary Clayton, whose extensive re-examination of Carolingian homiliaries turned up no analogues for the specific arrangement of the Vercelli Book even among collections designated for preaching to the laity.⁹ Likewise, there appear to be no extant Latin or vernacular Anglo-Saxon manuscripts pre-dating the Vercelli Book that contain both poetry and homiletic texts (though there are of course countless models of so-called miscellanies).¹⁰ Of later manuscripts containing Old English, the mid-eleventh-century manuscript CCC 201, for example, contains a comparable combination of homiletic prose interspersed with more than a single piece of Old English religious verse.¹¹

Audience and Purpose

The apparently unique make-up of the Vercelli Book has produced considerable speculation about its original purpose and intended audience.¹² Though many of the individual homilies (or groups of homilies) were likely used in a preaching context,¹³ it

seems unlikely that the Vercelli Book as a whole fulfilled the same purpose. Lacking as it does a comprehensive program for the liturgical calendar, the manuscript's make-up is also unusual in its use of overlapping homiletic items, as may be seen for example in the inclusion of two sets of homilies for Rogationtide (XI–XIII and in XIX–XXI), the two homilies for Christmas (V and VI), and indeed in the recurrence of substantial homiletic material in Vercelli II and XXI.¹⁴ The collection likewise demonstrates considerable repetition at the level of theme, given the strong emphasis on eschatological and penitential material.¹⁵

Since a liturgical order has not been detected for the collection, it was suggested by Kenneth Sisam that the collection itself likely represents a 'reading book' intended for personal devotion.¹⁶ Sisam's proposition remains generally unchallenged, and may perhaps be corroborated by palaeographical evidence showing the unadorned and plain manuscript to be more suitable for private ownership than a public display copy.¹⁷ Developing Sisam's thesis, Milton McC. Gatch concluded that the collection's concentrated emphasis of eschatological materials 'must have been intended for penitential reading in a monastic community.'¹⁸ This view was still further synthesized by Éamonn Ó Carragáin, who in his doctoral thesis argued that the collection's concentration on eschatological and penitential themes aligned it with the tradition of the ascetic *florilegium*, intended for monastic readers.¹⁹ For Ó Carragáin, the idea of the 'florilegium' emerged from his detection of a series of self-contained 'booklets,' organized in units by major themes, and sometimes by liturgical occasion, even though the manuscript as a whole seems never to have been intended for use in the liturgical service.²⁰ Whether or not one accepts in every detail Ó Carragáin's programmatic view of the sequential link between items in each booklet, he nevertheless makes an excellent case for a principal collector behind the Vercelli Book, who selected appropriate materials over time.

Though the notion that the Vercelli Book formed a devotional 'reader' remains the most suitable characterization of the collection, the terms 'monastic' or even 'ascetic' have more recently been questioned. One important catalyst for reinterpretation has been the discovery that the homilies on the

whole tend to encourage moderation rather than asceticism, urging, for example, temperate eating and frequent prayer, rather than excessive practices of fasting, rigorous self-denial, and mortification of the flesh. As we shall see in [chapter 7](#), in a discussion of the homily for St Guthlac, this championing of a ‘middle way’ that eschews behavioural extremes appears to be symptomatic of the Vercelli homilies as a whole.²¹

In assessing the ‘audience’ of several groups of homilies within the Vercelli Book, Charles D. Wright has furthermore argued convincingly that several items were likely composed ‘not of monks who lived the common life and followed the Benedictine Rule, but of secular clergy.’²² As Wright demonstrates, the authors of Vercelli XI–XIII (as a single unit) and that of XV ‘tailored’ their sources so as to temper the ascetic stance towards the possession of wealth expressed in the Latin sources from which they drew either directly or indirectly.²³ Such a softening with regard to the ownership of material goods, Wright has shown, potentially finds an appropriate audience in the secular clergy, since in the ninth and tenth centuries they could both own personal property and undergo marriage. But while the evidence might seem logically to place the composition of these homilies in the period before the major reforms were implemented in the monasteries (which led to the expulsion of the secular clerics and their replacement by monks who were avowed strictly to follow the Benedictine Rule), Wright places the homilies in the aftermath of such changes, viewing them as a pointed response to the prohibition of private property (as expressed in chapter 33 of the Rule).²⁴ Concentrating especially on those passages in Vercelli XI (excerpted above)²⁵ and XV that describe the spoliation of churches by secular and religious powers, and the corruption of the clergy, Wright detects in these homilies a tone that is perhaps less obviously the disgruntled expression of a monk railing against ‘the secular appropriation of monasteries,’ and more convincingly the ‘bitter complaint about the Benedictine Reform from the perspective of a secular cleric, that class of *godcundan hadas* who were dispossessed by reforming bishops in collusion with King Edgar and other powerful magnates.’²⁶

The study of such attitudes within individual homilies only

raises larger questions about the purpose and audience of the manuscript as a whole. Wright does not presume that the circumstances governing the composition and reception of homilies XI–XIII and XV and those that led to the compilation and audience of the Vercelli Book in its entirety are necessarily comparable. However, this evidence, when weighed against other internal cues in the homilies themselves does seem to point to just such a conclusion for the collection as a whole, since even those homilies which condemn outright the possession of excessive wealth and luxury, such as Vercelli X and VII, do not aggressively suggest an ascetic alternative. Ó Carragáin, returning to such passages within the Vercelli Book, has since offered the revised view that the collection may have served as a canon's private book, echoing the interests of 'old clerics, who lived under the old order and felt more at home with it.'²⁷ Ó Carragáin speculates that it is precisely the 'old-fashioned' spirit of the collection that may have earned it a place on a pilgrimage among the possessions of a secular canon, and eventually a welcome home in Vercelli, Italy, since the city itself contains a shrine to St Eusebius, the patron saint of canons.²⁸ Such a movement away from the notion of a strictly monastic audience seems prudent, though the assessment of the Vercelli Book as an 'old fashioned' collection does not quite square with the findings of Scragg and others, who have demonstrated the fact that copies of individual Vercelli homilies continued to retain a vigorous post-conquest afterlife in England. Perhaps a synthesis of these various views is possible: the Vercelli Book, may on the one hand, be characterized as 'reactionary,' in so far as it contains homilies appearing to reject some of the new practices articulated by the Reform, but also intensely 'modern' in ways that have yet to be more fully articulated through the study of how these anonymous homilies fit in with the interests and styles of both later compilers and named authors (such as Ælfric and Wulfstan).

A contrasting viewpoint has recently been put forward by Elaine Treharne, who suggests that the Vercelli Book was compiled for the use of a bishop or abbot. Treharne argues that the repetition within the manuscript of homilies set for specific feast and fast days makes it especially fitting for pastoral use, since the book's 'programmatically unity is manifested by the functionality of the manuscript for someone present sporadically

at major feasts in the church year where a variety of materials were required for repeat performance.’²⁹ In assessing the genres of the Vercelli Book, Treharne provides three *comparanda* in the form of roughly contemporary manuscripts, which could be described as miscellanies, and which are known to have been dedicated to ‘senior prelates’: these include BL, CCCC 201, Cleopatra B. xiii + London, Lambeth Palace Library 489, and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 113 + 114.³⁰ Despite the obvious lack of dedicatory evidence for the Vercelli Book itself, Treharne’s comparative approach is intriguing for several reasons: on the one hand, it provides a serious challenge to the claim that the Vercelli Book is *sui generis* (solely because it does not conform to its Carolingian predecessors), and on the other, it breaks with received criticism in claiming a purpose for the manuscript’s ‘pragmatic unity.’ One wonders, however, what practical ‘pastoral’ application could be claimed for the six poems contained in the manuscript, and here further comparison with the catechetical poems in CCCC 201 may yet prove revealing. Beyond the broad acknowledgment of liturgical inspiration for the Vercelli poems,³¹ the didactic purpose of these texts still requires further analysis and comment. Likewise, since Treharne envisions the use of all three aforementioned miscellanies by bishops, it would be helpful to know whether the particular feast and fast days represented in the Vercelli Book (including, but not limited to, the Second Sunday in Lent, the Second Sunday after Penetecost, the two Sundays after Epiphany, the purification of Mary, and Rogationtide) would have been especially prone to draw a ‘public performance’ from such a high-ranking personage. Here again, further mapping of the points of overlap and dissonance between the Vercelli Book and Treharne’s various *comparanda* may yet stand to tell us a great deal more about the character, audience, and purpose of the Vercelli Book.³²

Turning to the Vercelli texts themselves, we find that with regard to theme and address, individual homilies provide little consistency with respect to a supposed audience. One problem arises from the fact that there are several layers of mediation evident in the manuscript, ranging from scribal interference to deliberate changes introduced by individual authors. While Milton McC. Gatch has maintained that the audience of the anonymous homilies as a whole is ultimately ‘unknowable,’³³

there have been enlightening efforts to explore this question further with respect to individual groupings of homilies within the Vercelli Book. The group in Vercelli XV–XVIII, for example, presents an interesting case, because while these homilies are generically dissimilar, comprising a catechetical homily, two exegetical ones, and a saint’s life (in that order), they are linked in the manuscript by a uniform rubric and a number of common linguistic features. Mary Clayton has argued that the homiliary behind this series probably contained exegetical homilies written for a lay audience.³⁴ However, a closer look at the forms of address contained in these texts may reveal a more complex relationship between the presumed exemplar and the Vercelli version of these homilies. In particular, the examination of the use of vocative forms in the homilies themselves demonstrates a more mixed audience than has been previously allowed. While these homilies contain several general references to *Men þa leofestan* (‘Dearest men’ or perhaps ‘Dearest people’; at XV.200; XVI.1, 94, and 198; XVII.1, 28, 47, 59, 93, and 129; and XVIII.1, 44, 300, and 306), they also contain appeals to *Broðor mine* (‘My brothers’; at XV.134, 185, and 197; XVI.99, 139, 142, 171, and 194; XVII.64 and 139),³⁵ an address that seems more appropriate to a monastic audience. The latter term, while a common translation of the Latin homiletic address *carissimi fratres*, occurs outside this sequence in only one other homily in the whole of the Vercelli Book.³⁶ To add to this layering, it may be significant that the four references to *Men þa leofestan* in the hagiographical Vercelli XVIII (at lines 1, 44, 300, and 306) are unattested in any of the variant versions for the life of St Martin.³⁷ In each occurrence found in the Vercelli version, the phrase appears as an abbreviated, and sometimes capitalized .*M*. This same abbreviation appears in each of the other homilies belonging to this group, with the exception of XVI.94, which contains the fuller abbreviation. *men þa l*. In all four homilies, then, the simplest explanation appears to be that the homilies were altered to make them appear more inclusive of a wider lay audience (and the use of abbreviated forms would likely have made such substitution easy). Indeed, such a layering of voices makes it difficult to generalize about notions of audience in relation to the collection as a whole.

Another intriguing witness to the potential audiences of the

Vercelli Book is Vercelli VII, which contains a lengthy address to women, together with a castigation of their tendency towards ‘soft’ living, luxury, and indolence.³⁸ As I have established elsewhere, the homily presents a close rendering of a Latin translation of John Chrysostom’s Homily XXIX on the Epistle to the Hebrews (especially 12:4–7).³⁹ In the context of the Vercelli Book itself, the presence of such an address raises additional questions about ‘audience.’ While (with a few notable exceptions) the critical focus has rested on the presumed male readership for the manuscript,⁴⁰ Vercelli VII highlights the important possibility of an ‘intended’ female audience, in the form of either readers or listeners (or both). Such an address finds precedent in a range of Anglo-Saxon genres, including (for example) the provision of advice to women in the earlier Bonifatian correspondence, in Aldhelm’s prose and verse *De uirginitate*, and in the early thirteenth-century Wintney Rule.⁴¹ Though the closeness of the address in Vercelli VII to the antifeminist rhetoric of John Chrysostom (aimed originally at an audience of women in fourth-century Alexandria) perhaps raises questions about the authenticity and currency of the exhortation as it appears in the Vercelli Book, the homilist’s otherwise careful ‘editing’ of his source would seem to underscore his capacity for ‘tailoring’ (to use Wright’s term) the address for a different audience, had he chosen to do so.⁴²

The example of Vercelli VII, however, raises the question as to whether women were to be numbered among the intended readership for the whole of the Vercelli Book, beyond this single occurrence. The presence of other texts in the collection that highlight powerful women seem to support this view, such as the poem *Elene* (whose eponymous title refers to Constantine’s mother, the discoverer of the true cross) and Vercelli XVII on the Purification of Mary (which sets up Mary as the paradigm for all Christians who would seek peace). Mary Dockray-Miller has recently argued for an intended female readership for the Vercelli Book as a whole, speculating that the erasure of what looks like the name *eadgyþ* on the last line of fol. 41v (in the *Andreas* - portion of the manuscript) may refer to St Edith of Wilton. This interesting detail has led Dockray-Miller to suggest an extended female readership for the Vercelli Book, and one intimately familiar with the cult of Edith, such as the nuns at Wilton or

Barking.⁴³ While Dockray-Miller's argument enriches claims for a female readership, the diversity of forms of address across the manuscript as a whole makes it difficult to narrow the readership in this way. It does, however, seem distinctly likely that at least a partially female audience was anticipated by the collector.

The presence of several potential audiences for the homilies poses difficulty not only in classifying the Vercelli Book, but also in locating analogues that pre-date the collection. While it has already been pointed out that there appear to be no extant parallels for the inclusion of both religious poetry and homiletic prose in any earlier surviving manuscript from Anglo-Saxon England, comparison between individual homilies contained in the Vercelli Book and those found in Latin homiliaries yields more promising results.⁴⁴ It is widely argued that there are several extant Carolingian analogues for homiliaries used in preaching to the laity, notably in the collections of Hrabanus Maurus, St Père de Chartres, and Landpertus of Mondsee.⁴⁵ While it has been supposed that Hrabanus's collection (which contains forty homilies for the *temporale* followed by thirty that may be used for any time) presents a possible model for the type of exemplar behind Vercelli XV–XVIII,⁴⁶ it is clear that several homilies contained in the St Père homiliary serve as sources for Vercelli XIX–XXI.⁴⁷ The evidence is strengthened further by the supposition that over nine hundred extant individual Carolingian homilies present possible models for preaching to lay audiences.⁴⁸ Though none of these Carolingian models presents an obvious parallel for the Vercelli Book as a supposed reading book, as a group they set a precedent for the type of exegetical and catechetical intermixture of styles seen in the Vercelli manuscript.

The discussion of audience in relation to the Vercelli Book also sets the stage for the treatment of contemporary and later Old English homiletic collections.⁴⁹ The Blickling homilies, for example, appear to contain a similar range to that of the Vercelli Book in terms of their expressed audience.⁵⁰ The internal evidence is particularly telling, as a sampling of Blickling IV, V, and X demonstrates possible reference to both ecclesiastics and laity.⁵¹ Similar strategies may be used to discover implied audiences in the later Old English collections. It is now widely

accepted that although Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies* were evidently composed for instruction of the laity, individual Ælfrician homilies may contain specific addresses to monks and secular clergy, and others still to a wider audience of both religious and laity.⁵² The cautious suggestion that the *Catholic Homilies* may have also been used as a reading book, on the basis of comments offered by Ælfric himself with respect to hearing and reading audiences, may reveal still further equivalences.⁵³ Wulfstan also apparently appeals to a mixed audience, for although many of the homilies are clearly addressed *ad populum* and *ad clerum*, others appear to be more flexible in terms of their target audience.⁵⁴ What these commonalities ultimately indicate is that either there is tremendous consistency with respect to the treatment of audience in the vernacular collections from the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, or else there is not enough information about preaching conditions at present to be able to distinguish between them properly. Although the question is perhaps most vexed in relation to the Vercelli Book, which contains such a wide range of genres and emphases upon common themes, the conclusion that the collection provides some kind of reading book for individual devotion seems inescapable.

Sources and Analogues

Of the three other Old English homiletic *corpora* that have been mentioned so far, namely the Blickling homilies and the homilies attributed to Ælfric and Wulfstan, the Vercelli Book has been compared most often to the Blickling homilies. One reason for this assessment is its relatively early date: the sole complete copy of the Blickling manuscript (Princeton, Princeton University Library, W.H. Scheide Collection, MS 71) was probably compiled at roughly the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh centuries.⁵⁵ The Blickling Book also overlaps textually with some of the Vercelli homilies: variant versions of parts of the same homily recur in Vercelli X.9–37 and 274–5 and Blickling IX (fols. 63v–65r), apparently designated for Rogation-tide in the Blickling manuscript, while Vercelli XVIII and Blickling XVIII present variant versions of the same homily for the feast of St Martin.⁵⁶ Furthermore, a rudimentary comparison of the two manuscripts reveals that they share other generic similarities: both contain a

mixture of homilies and saints' lives, and both include homilies that employ hortatory and paranetic styles. But what distinguishes the Blickling Book is its generous inclusion of exegetical texts.⁵⁷ This number increases significantly if included within this category are homilies like Blickling I and XIV, which draw extensively upon the bible and make use of exegesis, even though they do not display distinctive gospel or epistolary pericopes.⁵⁸

Still closer scrutiny reveals that the two collections display very different principles of organization. While the Vercelli Book appears to be arranged in order to highlight recurring themes and motifs, the Blickling manuscript appears to have been compiled, organized, and even possibly composed in an order corresponding to that of the liturgical calendar.⁵⁹ As such, the manuscript presents a partial *sanctorale*, offering four items for the lives of Saints Peter and Paul, Michael, Martin, and Andrew, as well as an incomplete *temporale*, containing fourteen items designated for diverse holidays,⁶⁰ including the Annunciation (Blickling I), Shrove Sunday (II), the first, third, fifth, and sixth Sundays in Lent (III–VI), Easter (VII), Rogationtide Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday (VIII–X), Ascensiontide (XI), Pentecost (XII), the Assumption of Mary (XIII), and the Birth of John the Baptist (XIV). Though the homiliary noticeably misses out feasts for Advent, Christmas, and the Epiphany, a lacuna at the beginning of Blickling I raises the possibility that the manuscript once contained one or more homilies for these occasions, thereby presenting an even more traditional and full program.⁶¹ Even in its incomplete state, the Blickling homiliary appears to have been designed with a different purpose in mind than that for the Vercelli collection.

While the tendency has been to invoke too facile a correspondence between the Vercelli and Blickling books, by contrast, a particular sticking point has been a perceived binary division between the homilies of anonymous authors on the one hand, and those attributed to Ælfric and Wulfstan on the other, especially with regard to their prose styles, their use of sources, their supposed orthodoxy, and their intended audiences.⁶² Several key articles (in particular by Mary Clayton and Joyce Hill) have addressed these features at length, and are responsible

for the critical shift away from such rigid distinctions.⁶³ For the present, an analysis of content alone reveals that the homiletic *corpora* attributed to Ælfric and Wulfstan are not so dissimilar from the models presented in the Vercelli and Blickling manuscripts. Of the numerous homiletic works attributed to Ælfric, the most extensive collection is his twin series of so-called *Catholic Homilies* composed in 989 and 995.⁶⁴ The collections survive whole or in part in no fewer than sixteen manuscripts dated to before 1100, an indication of the relative popularity of Ælfric's homilies compared to the earlier works.⁶⁵ As in the Vercelli and Blickling manuscripts, Ælfric's collections present a mixture of exegesis (expounding gospel or epistolary pericopes), catechetical instruction, and saints' lives. However, the *Catholic Homilies* are noticeably closer in form to the Blickling collection, presenting as they do a full *temporale* and partial *sanctorale*,⁶⁶ offering homilies for every Sunday and the main feast days, and enough of each to cover two consecutive liturgical cycles.⁶⁷ A vastly different model is presented in the early-eleventh-century corpus of homiletic writings attributed to Wulfstan, Archbishop of York.⁶⁸ Although the texts themselves are not located in a single inclusive collection, they display considerable unity in terms of theme and focus.⁶⁹ The majority of Wulfstan's preaching texts are catechetical in nature and have been categorized by their most recent editor according to four main topics: eschatology, the Christian faith, archiepiscopal functions, and evil days.⁷⁰ Wulfstan's sermons are not generally set or arranged according to the ecclesiastical calendar, and follow a model that (in terms of content alone) is comparable to that found in the Vercelli Book.⁷¹

However, the rationale for a critical divide in the treatment of these homiletic *corpora* is clearly more complex than this brief outline allows. The question of sources has proved particularly important in this regard, especially since it was first posited on the basis of internal evidence assembled from the *Catholic Homilies* themselves that Ælfric rejected some of the apocryphal sources cited in the anonymous homilies as being heretical.⁷² Ælfric's criticism of such sources as the *Visio Pauli*, which he labels in his homily entitled *Item in letania maiore: feria tertia* (*CHII*, XX.14) 'ða leasan gesetnysse' ('a false composition'), has not unreasonably led some to identify those Vercelli and Blickling homilies that manifestly draw upon this heterodox tradition.⁷³

However, Ælfric's apparent orthodoxy with respect to his views on *gedwyld* ('heresy') has more recently been challenged by critics who demonstrate that although Ælfric was trained directly by reformers of the Benedictine movement (such as Æthelwold of Winchester), he appears to present a far more rigid view than those held by his predecessors and teachers.⁷⁴ This view of Ælfric has been substantiated by the lack of similar wide-scale campaigns against heretical teaching in other Old English texts, and by the fact that Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies* circulated together with anonymous works that he himself may have considered questionable, sometimes even in own lifetime.⁷⁵

But if the homilies of Ælfric and (to a lesser extent) Wulfstan are regarded as presenting a highly learned, Latinate tradition, the accepted corollary has been that the anonymous authors offer a more impressionistic or less erudite use of source material.⁷⁶ While the occurrence of misquoted Latin and biblical citations in the anonymous works has clearly influenced this opinion, the concentration on mistakes committed by individual authors has hindered consideration of the sources of the collection as a whole.⁷⁷ An overview of the sources and analogues to the twenty-three prose homilies in the Vercelli Book reveals a rich and cultured compendium of sources drawn upon by individual authors:⁷⁸ according to the *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici* database, no fewer than 123 separate sources and analogues have been identified for the Vercelli homilies, including unsurprising if extensive borrowings from biblical sources, and alleged parallels with later vernacular Welsh and Irish texts.⁷⁹ The number increases somewhat if we consider those texts not yet treated in the *Fontes* database, such as Vercelli II and XXI (though these have been treated by Scragg in his *VH* ; see [chapter 3](#) below), and also several others for which sources and analogues have only more recently been discovered.⁸⁰ Some of these shed new light on the variety of sources thought to have been available to the Vercelli homilists, since on several occasions there are no surviving manuscripts containing these works in Anglo-Saxon England. Especially 'exotic' in this sense are Ephrem the Syrian's *De paenitentia* (a source for Vercelli IV) and a Latin translation (by Mutianus Scholasticus) of John Chrysostom's Homily XXIX on the Epistle to the Hebrews (the main source for Vercelli VII).⁸¹

Among the more widely circulating authors and texts apparently used as sources by the composers of the Vercelli homilies are Ambrose, Bede, Boethius, Gregory, Caesarius of Arles, and Sulpicius Severus. In certain cases, even when the precise manuscript consulted is unknown, the source can be traced to a particular version of a text appearing in a specific redaction or manuscript.⁸² All told, there have on average been nine different sources so far identified for every Vercelli homily, although the distribution is distinctly uneven: no Latin sources at all have been detected for Vercelli II,⁸³ while some texts rely heavily on a single source. So, for example, Vercelli XXIII apparently draws exclusively upon Felix's *Vita S. Guthlaci*, while Vercelli XV appears only to borrow from the apocryphal *Apocalypse of Thomas*.⁸⁴ Vercelli XVIII, by contrast, brings together two works by the same author, as lines 6–222 derive from Sulpicius Severus's *Vita S. Martini*, while lines 223–99 are dependent upon his so-called *Epistula tertia ad Basilium*.⁸⁵ A similar case in point is Vercelli VIII, the body of which (lines 11–80) is largely confected from adaptations of two of the sermons of Caesarius of Arles: VIII.11–32 draw on Caesarius's *sermo* 58, while VIII.46–80 are based on *sermo* 57.⁸⁶ In some cases, the ability to locate a source for a homily does not disclose the full extent of its influences. While the main source for Vercelli XXII has been identified as Isidore's *Synonyma*, as we shall see in [chapter 5](#), there are likely other intermediary vernacular sources at play. A different case in point is Vercelli I, the sources of which (traced so far) are entirely biblical, and indeed almost exclusively evangelical. In sharp contrast to these homilies, several others appear to draw on as many as twenty different sources each, which thus argues for considerable sophistication by their authors in the manipulation and combination of (primarily Latin) source-texts.⁸⁷

In addition (according to the *Fontes* database), no fewer than twenty-eight books of the Bible are apparently drawn upon by the authors of the Vercelli homilies, divided evenly between the Old Testament and the New. But here again the raw statistics mask a surprising fact:⁸⁸ despite the constant references to Doomsday themes throughout the Vercelli homilies,⁸⁹ none appears to draw directly on the language of the Apocalypse, preferring instead to cite the same familiar passages from the Gospels. Aside from the

frequent references to the Vulgate, rarer shared sources may seem to connect certain of the Vercelli texts: the same sermon by Caesarius of Arles, *sermo* 207, was evidently used as a direct or antecedent source in no fewer than four separate Vercelli homilies – XI.1–4, XIV.1–2, XIX.55–7 (though probably copied from Cambridge Pembroke College 25, item 38), and XX. 1–4 and 11–12 (with the possible influence of Cambridge Pembroke College 25, items 38 and 40). The fact that the same opening sentence to Caesarius’s sermon is suspected as a source in three of the five instances where his putative influence has been adduced (in Vercelli XI, XIV, and XX), though the Old English is different on each occasion, may suggest either fresh translation on each occasion or reworking of a pre-existing vernacular version. Whatever the precise derivation of these lines, the Vercelli Book provides valuable evidence for the circulation and use of Caesarius’s work in Anglo-Saxon England.⁹⁰ Though the pronounced influence of Caesarius on these and other anonymous homilies was once cited as evidence for the disparity between the types of sources used in earlier vernacular homiletic collections and those drawn upon by Ælfric and Wulfstan, recent re-evaluation of materials once attributed to Augustine, now properly re-assigned to Caesarius as an intermediary influence, demonstrates greater similarity between homilies by named and unnamed authors: it has now been posited that Caesarius was an influence for no fewer than nine Ælfrician homilies and fifteen anonymous homilies.⁹¹

Even where sources can be identified for the Vercelli homilies, it is of course entirely possible that some of the texts in the collection relied in the first instance on now-lost vernacular versions of the Latin texts identified as direct sources: certainly, there are abundant verbal and thematic parallels linking individual Vercelli homilies not only to other texts in the Vercelli Book,⁹² but also (as we have seen in the case of Napier XXX, drawing on Vercelli homilies IV, IX, X, and XXI) to a range of other extant Old English texts and authors beyond the manuscript itself. The collection of verbal parallels with other Old English texts both within the Vercelli Book and outside it must remain a high priority for future research.⁹³ For the present, this overview demonstrates not, as some would suggest, an elusive relationship to source materials, but rather an allusive and sophisticated

integration, and sometimes repetition, of influences within the collection as a whole.

Genre

It has already been noted that the six poems and twenty-three prose items in the Vercelli manuscript are interwoven without obvious distinction between genres. This intercalation of texts would seem to suggest that the compiler saw no great disparity between the genres of poetry and prose.⁹⁴ One important exception in terms of layout can be seen in the scribe's practice of beginning every new stint of poetry (i.e., the first poem in each of three clusters of poetry, beginning with *Andreas* at fol. 29v, *Soul and Body I* at fol. 101v, and *Elene* at 121r) with a sizeable capital, and at the very top of a new page.⁹⁵ The occurrence is highlighted by the fact that in each case the scribe had room to spare on the previous page: at the end of Homily V (which directly precedes the poem *Andreas*) a blank space is left for as many as nineteen lines; at the end of Vercelli XVIII (directly preceding *Soul and Body I*), unused lines are ruled for a further seven lines; and at the end of Vercelli XXII (preceding *Elene*) a further fifteen lines remain unoccupied. The spacing of the poems undoubtedly illustrate their piecemeal inclusion, albeit in definitive groups. Yet, in contrast to other Old English manuscripts containing poetry and prose, the poems do not appear as a single, undivided unit (as they do, for example, in the so-called *Beowulf* manuscript, or in CCC 201). Despite the manuscript evidence exhibiting a general continuity with regard to genre, all the major editions of the Vercelli manuscript produced so far distinguish sharply between the two genres.⁹⁶ The extent to which this trend reflects (or shapes) a critical divide between the poetry and prose texts is echoed in the vast majority of secondary criticism that treats the two genres as virtually separate entities. While studies of the poetry have tended to focus on the style and rhetoric of these texts, the emphasis in the case of the prose works has overwhelmingly been on the side of source study. Where the overlapping of content and theme is allowed, there has been an unbalanced tendency to study the homiletic influence (both direct and indirect) on the verse texts in the collection.⁹⁷ For example, in the case of the poem *Elene* it has

been widely noted that the speeches and events manifestly incorporate biblical quotation, exegesis, and especially exhortation.⁹⁸ Such a finding hardly comes as a surprise given the extensive documentation of Cynewulf's use of Latin rhetoric and patristic sources.⁹⁹ The same is clearly true of the *Dream of the Rood*, whose ending (from as early as line 95), once held to be structurally awkward, is now argued to be homiletic in tone and theme.¹⁰⁰ The poem *Soul and Body I* bears an even more direct relationship to the prose contained in the manuscript, as it draws generally upon a pool of Latin and vernacular sources known to the homilists of Vercelli IV, IX, and XXII, and adapted by at least seven other vernacular homilists.¹⁰¹ By extension, *Homiletic Fragment I* requires no comment except to point out the casual manner in which the term 'homiletic' is used; this feature stands out particularly when it is considered that an unrelated but equally 'homiletic' poem (in *Homiletic Fragment II*) occurs in the Exeter Book, a manuscript that contains only poetry.¹⁰² While Cynewulf's *Fates of the Apostles* and *Andreas* are not generally noted for their homiletic content, the former has attracted special attention on the basis of its penitential tone and structure,¹⁰³ and the latter on the basis of its strongly typological disposition, not to mention the embedded 'sermon' delivered by an unsuspecting Andreas to Christ himself (disguised as a steersman) on the nature and powers of the saviour.¹⁰⁴

The ease with which the term 'homiletic' has been applied to poetry in the Vercelli Book finds widespread parallels in the larger corpus.¹⁰⁵ Once again, Cynewulf presents an obvious example, as his Ascension poem (*Christ II*) in the Exeter Book has been the subject of no fewer than three full-length source studies that link the poem to works by Caesarius of Arles, the source also drawn upon by the author of Vercelli VIII.¹⁰⁶ Another well-documented example is the poem *Judgment Day II*, contained in CCCC 201, which is partially derived from the poem *De die iudicii* attributed to Bede,¹⁰⁷ and which also demonstrates discernible textual connections with a later homily contained in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 113.¹⁰⁸ Graham D. Caie has examined not only the ways in which Bede's prose renders the poem more 'homiletic,' but also the extent to which the heavily prosaic manuscript context of CCCC 201 influences the style and rhetoric of this poem, and indeed the other group of poems contained in

the collection.¹⁰⁹ One might also place within this wider tradition the late Old English poem *The Grave* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 343 [fol. 170r]), which appears to draw on sources directly or indirectly shared by Vercelli IX.¹¹⁰ Though there has yet to be a systematic examination of this connection, even a cursory comparison of the poems yields fruitful verbal and thematic parallels.¹¹¹ Perhaps also relevant in this context is the speech now commonly referred to as ‘Hrothgar’s sermon’ in *Beowulf* (lines 1700–84), which shows the identification of homiletic materials in even the most unlikely of places.¹¹² Further classification of what makes these poems seem ‘homiletic’ will surely serve to generate a more precise vocabulary for analysing the prose sermons themselves.

Style and Rhetoric

While the influence of prose genres and styles (including, of course patristic material) upon vernacular poetry has been well attested, there has not been a wide-scale reciprocal treatment of those rhetorical devices most commonly associated with Old English poetry found in Old English prose. The marked exception has been those studies relating to the prose styles of both Ælfric and Wulfstan, where considerable emphasis has been placed upon the formal study of both Ælfric’s alliterative prose and Wulfstan’s two-stressed rhythm, as well as other associated stylistic and rhetorical features.¹¹³ Yet, even in the case of these two authors, the focus has traditionally been on form rather than content, and almost completely to the exclusion of anonymous prose writers.

Despite this apparent gap in practice, ample theoretical ground has been set out in a few key studies.¹¹⁴ D.R. Letson’s examination of style and rhetoric in the anonymous homilies, and in particular the use of so-called poetic features in Vercelli II, presents a particular cornerstone.¹¹⁵ Though focused on this one particular text, Letson’s discussion is important both in its recognition of cross-generic features within the homily and in its appeal to Latin precursors in both prose and poetry. Furthermore, Letson’s citation of Augustine’s *De doctrina christiana* (IV.xx.41) as presenting, in effect, a licence for the use of ‘rhyme and rhythm for ... rhetorical effect’ importantly grounds his investigation in

patristic writings about the place of rhetoric in the religious sermon. More recently, Charles D. Wright, in considering the occurrence of poetry in Vercelli XXI (and to some extent in Vercelli II), revisits and refines some of Letson's findings.¹¹⁶ While Letson unqualifyingly uses the terminology 'poetic homily' to refer to the occurrence of poetic features in religious prose, Wright investigates degrees of assimilation and cross-pollination between poetry and prose according to the various categories of prosody proposed by Angus McIntosh, Eric Stanley, and Haruko Momma,¹¹⁷ and also seminal linguistic analyses of poetic and prosaic diction articulated by Roberta Frank, Eric Stanley, Mary P. Richards, and Mark S. Griffiths.¹¹⁸ More has yet to be gained from elements of style observed in the wider field of vernacular preaching. Hildegard Tristram, for example, has focused on examples of 'verbal artistry' across the corpus of Old English homilies,¹¹⁹ while Clare Lees has carefully mapped differences in presentation and style between Ælfric and Wulfstan with regard to their adaptation of a single homily.¹²⁰ Still others have been concerned particularly with stylistic influences derived from disparate traditions: two important studies include that by Charles D. Wright on the influence of Irish and Hiberno-Latin rhetorical devices,¹²¹ and that by Thomas N. Hall on Old English connections with Norse homilies.¹²²

In the consideration of style and rhetoric, it is undoubtedly the case that the analysis of the homilies of Ælfric and Wulfstan, for whom a (more or less) defined corpus can be determined, has simply seemed a more manageable task than the analysis of those collections that feature the works of multiple authors.¹²³ With respect to the Vercelli Book, Paul E. Szarmach's indispensable overview of the content and style of the homilies, as well as Éamonn Ó Carragáin's study of the codicology and theology of the prose and poetry in the Vercelli Book remain unique.¹²⁴ However, while these studies focus intently on the theological, liturgical, and contextual links between individual texts, there remains a need for the analysis of rhetorical devices employed in the prose texts of the Vercelli Book, whether derived from vernacular poetry or prose, or even through the broader potential influence of Latin rhetoric. Paul E. Szarmach's recently updated survey and analysis of the 'styles' in the Vercelli Book clearly leads us in this direction, as he argues (more persuasively than

has heretofore been articulated) for a continuing narrative with regard to the kinds of prose styles in the Vercelli Book and that witnessed in the homilies of Ælfric and Wulfstan. While he shows that Ælfric may have ultimately rejected the at times ‘impassioned’ exhortation of the Vercelli Book, Wulfstan embraced precisely those ‘features that allow him to exhort and move his audience to obey Christian and secular law.’¹²⁵

The present study is less directly concerned with setting up a narrative of continuity between the Vercelli Book and later authors, though it is hoped that this dedicated study of the homilies will further open the way for just such an interpretation. Certainly, the wide and continued circulation of some of the Vercelli homilies in the eleventh and twelfth centuries highlights the possibility of just such an endeavour. Instead, the objective here will be to take on the still very much neglected task of identifying homiletic styles and influences, particularly as they apply to the Vercelli Book. The twin terms ‘style’ and ‘rhetoric’ are intended to engage more than one set of formalist concerns. By ‘style’ I mean to localize particular generic influences, as it is customary to speak, for example, of ‘paranetic,’ ‘enumerative,’ ‘hisperic,’ or ‘hermeneutic’ styles, different as they may be in place and character of origin. This assessment holds true despite the fact that to a specialized Anglo-Saxonist audience, these terms take on a dedicated register: while ‘enumerative,’ has become virtually synonymous with ‘Irish-style catalogues,’¹²⁶ the term ‘hermeneutic’ has come to refer to the distinctly ‘homegrown’ phenomenon of using arcane Greek (and Latin) vocabulary.¹²⁷ By contrast, the term ‘rhetoric’ is suggestive of another range or set of criteria. On the one hand, it still encapsulates, as it did in classical antiquity, the *ars bene dicendi* (as formulated, for example, by Quintilian in his *Institutio oratoria* II.xvii.37) in so far as it is ‘aimed at the good production of text (for oral delivery) with the aim of persuading the listeners to take or adopt some form of action or belief.’¹²⁸ This umbrella term remains particularly useful for talking about homilies, to the extent that homilies (in performance or in reading) intend to elicit an ‘illocutionary act,’ seeking ‘to have an effect and invite a response,’¹²⁹ even if such responses entail non-verbal penitential or conversionary experiences. However, for the present study, which remains more focused on the literary artefact (rather than

the presumed ‘oral’ dimension of some of the homilies) of the Vercelli Book, the term ‘rhetoric’ is used more liberally to identify a variety of literary devices, whether or not these follow a formalized classical or medieval *ars rhetorica* (in the tradition of Cicero and Quintilian, for example) or *ars grammatica* (following the model of Donatus and Priscian), which, as Gabriela Knappe has argued, likely held more direct influence upon Anglo-Saxon authors.¹³⁰

The distinction between direct and indirect Latinate influence is important, because the question as to whether Anglo-Saxon writers were trained systematically in classical rhetoric, or even had widespread knowledge of classical texts, is still clearly a vexed issue, given the limited textual and historical evidence available for addressing it. This ambiguity remains despite the pioneering work of scholars such as Neil Wright, J.D.A. Ogilvy, Michael Lapidge, and Helmut Gneuss, who have managed partially to reconstruct (in so far as is possible) what classical materials and rhetorical manuals libraries in Anglo-Saxon England may have contained,¹³¹ while Lapidge and Donald Bullough, writing on the Anglo-Saxon school curriculum, have helped us to better understand what key texts were likely to have been studied in a scholastic environment.¹³² However, information surrounding the formal study of rhetoric in Anglo-Saxon schools, and more specifically by Anglo-Saxon authors, remains riddled with doubt, and scholars such as Luke Reinsma, Jackson J. Campbell, and Gabriele Knappe have all addressed, challenged, and questioned to some degree the fitness of using Latin rhetorical designations for analysing Old English compositions.¹³³

Furthermore, against this Latinate background, it must nevertheless be allowed that the perceived parallels between Latin and vernacular rhetorical models may just as likely arise from the resemblance of native and independently inspired vernacular rhetorical techniques that are more conveniently labelled by their Latin equivalents. So, for example, the technique commonly recognized by the Latin rhetorical trope ‘anaphora,’ may just as clearly correlate to the use of the device signalled in the study of vernacular texts (particularly in verse) as ‘incremental repetition’ (the repetition of key words, sounds or

phrases at the beginning of successive ‘paragraphs’ of sense). In the case of a text like *The Wife’s Lament*, which is not normally associated with the literate Latin tradition, the latter nomenclature simply seems more fitting.¹³⁴ In light of this last example, it may be seen that the debate in some ways has more to do with ontology than practice. Without seeking to trivialize these differences, it will nevertheless be the practice here to draw upon terminologies derived from the study of both traditions as seems appropriate in the context of the text analysed.

It is therefore with the acknowledgment of such formalist difficulties that this book seeks to explore both the style and rhetoric of the Vercelli homilies through a close analysis of features such as verbal repetition, adaptation of Latin sources, recurring themes, connected metaphors, and mixed genres, comparing these devices when possible to both Latinate and vernacular examples (as explained in the Preface). By providing a series of snapshots of disparate homilies in the Vercelli Book, the aim is to highlight the individual artistry of their authors, as well as the sensitivity of the compiler of the collection as a whole.¹³⁵ Though this kind of formalist approach obviously requires analysis of the codicology of the manuscript, and a grasp of its theological underpinnings (especially in so far as these features affect the order and manner of presentation of items in the collection), these concerns remain secondary. This book as a whole likewise seeks to highlight the Vercelli collection’s close connections with prevailing literary trends in both Latin and the vernacular. Rather than seeing the manuscript as the anomalous compilation of an eccentric individual, and one that encompasses a backward glance to an outmoded past (in terms of both its theology and composition), the present study follows Paul E. Szarmach’s most recent assessment of the Vercelli prose as ‘a summary of the options for prose style,’¹³⁶ which were adapted to various degrees in genre and form by Ælfric and Wulfstan, and cherished by later compilers who continued to circulate these homilies well beyond the tenth century.

3 Seeing Double: The Repetition of Themes and Text in the Vercelli Book

It has become a commonplace to think about the texts in the Vercelli Book as having been selected, organized, and presented in no particular order, and with no particular plan. The most recent editor of the homilies, Donald G. Scragg, has argued that ‘it is probable that whoever assembled the collection had no preconceived idea of what items he would include and therefore no overall design for his book.’¹ A principal factor in Scragg’s assessment has been the repetition of items set for the same fast and feast days, so that in contrast to the traditional homiliary (where we might expect to find a collection of texts arranged according to the liturgical calendar), in the Vercelli Book no such order prevails. Among those Vercelli homilies designated for the *temporale* (or the liturgical calendar), we find the following apparent redundancies (as shown in appendix 1): the manuscript contains two sets of Rogationtide homilies (Vercelli XI, XII, and XIII; XIX, XX, and XXI), together with a third, independently circulating homily (X) designated for Rogation; two homilies for Christmas (V and VI);² and three for Epiphany (VIII, IX, and XVI).³ A general sameness with regard to theme has also been detected for the nine homilies included for unspecified occasions, where similar penitential and apocalyptic topoi repeat with great frequency.⁴ Such persistent parallelism is usually attributed to the eccentric and idiosyncratic tastes of the Vercelli collector, who (it has perhaps too readily been presumed) was working outside an established literary tradition.⁵ While [chapters 1](#) and [2](#) have challenged this exaggerated view of the manuscript’s nonconformity to extant Latin and Old English homiliaries, the present chapter will investigate more closely this claim of ‘eccentricity’ as it affects the selection and order of items in the manuscript.

From an aesthetic point of view, one matter that has seemed especially problematic for scholars is the replication of large portions of text within discrete homilies. Significant verbal repetitions can be found in the section on fasting common to Vercelli homilies III.89–158 and XX.35–56 (translated independently from the same Latin homily),⁶ in some of the

portents announcing Christ's birth in V.57–96 and VI.16–40 (drawn ultimately from separate gospels), and especially in II.2–81 and 108–19, and XXI. 158–257, where we find the replication (albeit copied independently from a common antecedent) of almost all the text of Vercelli II within the more extensive Vercelli XXI.⁷ This last example has characteristically been cited as evidence of the haphazardness of the collection as a whole, and some have argued that it represents a serious oversight on the part of the compiler, or scribe, or both.⁸ But such a view betrays a modern preference for 'original' composition over that which is borrowed, inherited, or otherwise reiterated, ignoring perhaps the very different tastes of authors (or in this case collectors) towards 'found' materials. By considering the redundancies in the Vercelli Book as accidents of transcription, this perspective disallows not only important generic distinctions between those items set for wholly different occasions, and which are reflective of disparate textual histories, but it also discounts the use of verbal and structural repetition as an effective rhetorical device in prose composition. Similar poetic examples of repetition within the same manuscript have not met with the same prejudice, as is clear (for example) from the substantial criticism devoted to the two versions of *Riddle 30* contained in the same Exeter Book,⁹ or perhaps more generally the two obviously distinct Guthlac poems found in the same collection,¹⁰ not to mention the numerous studies devoted more generally to the analysis of the style and rhetoric of textual variants in verse.¹¹

The result is that while a rich and descriptive vocabulary has been generated for discussing repetitions in poetry at the level of the word, phrase, and scene (using terms like 'ring composition,' 'nonce-formula,' and 'envelope-patterning'),¹² this language has rarely been applied positively to prose.¹³ Such a bias is surely in need of redress. The following discussion will test and challenge the assumption that the large-scale repetition of text in the Vercelli manuscript is the product of either careless or unplanned work, first by asking whether palaeographical and codicological evidence supports this hypothesis for the manuscript as a whole, and then by turning to a more focused analysis of the textual repetitions between homilies II and XXI. The fact that similar examples of prose repetition occur within other Anglo-Saxon manuscripts only further highlights the need for a reassessment of

these aesthetic criteria. For example, while several letters have been known to repeat in manuscripts containing portions of the so-called Bonifatian correspondence, Wulfstan's homily XXI appears twice in slightly variant forms within CCC 201, on pp. 26 and 86, just as in BL, Cleopatra B. xiii + London, Lambeth Palace Library 489, 'part of the same Ælfric second series homily [XL] is copied twice, though at some physical remove.'¹⁴

In exploring the process by which the Vercelli Book was compiled, it was the studied opinion of both Sisam and Scragg that the texts that make up the Vercelli manuscript were copied by a single scribe and, as Sisam notes, 'in stages, as new exemplars became available.'¹⁵ This accretive view of the manuscript's compilation derives in part from the evidence (formulated most fully by Scragg) that although the Vercelli manuscript itself survives in a unique copy that was not reproduced from a pre-existing manuscript, the scribe was clearly working from collections of homilies that circulated independently. One such exemplar has been positively identified for the group comprising Vercelli homilies XIX–XXI, where a single author (or school) has drawn together (and expanded upon) materials confected especially from texts contained in the so-called St Père homiliary, witnessed most fully in the eleventh-century manuscript, Cambridge, Pembroke College 25.¹⁶ Further tell-tale signs that other antecedent groupings were used by the scribe in copying include independent numeration (in homilies VI–X, where the numbers ii–v are attached to the final four of these homilies), rubrication (as in Vercelli XI–XIV, where the first three homilies are designated for Rogationtide and the last for 'whatever time one wishes'), and sometimes even titles linked sequentially across several of the Vercelli homilies in a sequence (as in Vercelli XI–XIV and XV–XVIII).¹⁷ Even without the firm identification of all the pre-existing collections behind the Vercelli Book, it is generally agreed that at least three separate exemplars were consulted, wherein 'the scribe turned to a different exemplar after Homily IV and again after Homily XXII,' though there has been some disagreement in detail as to where finer subdivisions can be made beyond these broad groupings.¹⁸

Celia Sisam's study of the quire-structure of the manuscript both corroborates and challenges this ad hoc view of the

manuscript's development, by proposing two different stages of copying and editing. While Sisam's complex analysis is too intricate to be repeated here, a few illustrative examples will serve, and a more detailed perspective is offered in appendix 2, which provides a table comparing Scragg's division of the manuscript according to exemplar as set against Sisam's analysis of quire-structure, highlighting points at which these analyses diverge. Sisam's view of the earliest stages of the manuscript's assembly concurs with that of Scragg, in that she argues that on occasion the scribe was compelled to add, subtract, and rearrange leaves in the manuscript in order to make room for texts as they were newly incorporated. Assuming that a 'normal' quire in the Vercelli Book uses four sheets folded, which is to say eight leaves in total (though in point of fact there are numerous reasons why a given quire should diverge from this model), Sisam shows that variance from this 'ideal' can sometimes serve to highlight disruptions (planned or unplanned) in copying. Charting these intervals in appendix 2, we can see points at which the scribe has apparently stopped copying after completing an item (or group of items), presumably with no plans to progress to the materials now adjacent to it in the Vercelli Book. To highlight just one example, such a pattern can be located in the manuscript's 'abnormal' first, second, and third quires (arranged respectively as 8 + 1, 8 + 1, and 6 + 1), which seem to suggest that the 'scribe had no plans to add homily II when he finished copying homily I, and none to add homily IV when he finished homily III.'¹⁹ This piecemeal assemblage of texts (and eventually booklets) in the Vercelli Book, at least in the earliest stages of its compilation, seems clearly to show a degree of happenstance.²⁰

However, to present Sisam's evidence from another point of view (and from a perspective largely rejected by Scragg), the study of the quiring in the Vercelli Book also reveals the scribe's persistent editorial hand in the replacement, alteration, and movement of texts at various points in the editing of the manuscript. One potentially revealing example concerns the text of *The Dream of the Rood*, which as Sisam controversially argues, was a late addition to the middle section of the Vercelli Book, labelled by Scragg as group B. According to Sisam, several significant changes were made to the layout of this section in order to make room for *The Dream of the Rood*, which may have

been spliced into the manuscript only after the now surrounding materials (in the preceding *Soul and Body I* and *Homiletic Fragment I* and the following homilies XIX–XXI) had already been selected and written into the codex.²¹

Sisam's evidence for this late inclusion derives from the fact that quire 15, containing all but the first 21 lines of *The Dream of the Rood*, 'is irregular in both make-up and lineation, and its irregularities suggest that it was specially made to link to the Vercelli compilation the already copied quires 16 and 17, containing the end of Homily XX, Homilies XXI and XXII.'²² This perceived 'irregularity' emerges from the fact that while the first 21 lines (appearing on fol. 104v) are ruled from a 'normal' 24 lines per page, the rest of the text is crowded so that the remainder of the poem (on fols. 105r–6r) is ruled for an anomalous 32 lines per page, a ruling that persists as far as the beginning of homily XX (on folio 109v), while the remaining folios (110r–11v), containing all but 9 lines of homily XX, are ruled for 33 lines. In addition to this crowding, a further anomaly appears on folio 111v, where only 31 lines of the ruled 33 have been written in, filling the otherwise blank two lines at the bottom of the page with uncharacteristically long descenders and increasingly leisurely spaced text. Sisam's interpretation of these curious circumstances is that the scribe planned to fill the apportioned text containing the end of *The Dream of the Rood* and the beginning of Vercelli XX precisely to that point. She also hypothesizes that the scribe may have rejected a now lost quire 15, which contained not only those parts of homilies XIX and XX that the current quire contains, but also some other unspecified text (once occupying the place of the current *The Dream of the Rood*), which may have included 'matter not wanted for the Vercelli Book.' If Sisam is right, then once the scribe decided to expunge this previous material and include *The Dream of the Rood* he had to recopy homily XIX and the beginning of homily XX (up to fol. 111v) into the new fols. 15 and 16 of the Vercelli Book.

Sisam's view of the circumstances surrounding the copying of the text of *The Dream of the Rood* is not universally accepted. George Phillip Krapp, for example, reads no special discontinuity at this point in the manuscript, even where the scribe has manifestly crowded his text.²³ Though we cannot prove whether

Sisam's 'lost quire' theory is correct, the scribe's manipulation of space is surely the salient point here. And as Éamonn Ó Carragáin has persuasively argued, this manipulation of spacing in order to incorporate *The Dream of the Rood* would seem to show the work of a discerning and critical collector (or scribe), who sometimes changed his mind about materials already selected and written.²⁴ Other such apparent adjustments to the layout of the manuscript can be seen in appendix 2, where, for example, Sisam shows the scribe altering both spacing and ruling better to exhibit the poems *Andreas* and *Fates of the Apostles* (across parts of quires 4–7), so that Cynewulf's runic signature at the end of *Fates* appears at the top of a fresh folio (fol. 54r), significantly matching the layout of Cynewulf's second runic signature at the end of *Elene* (fol. 133r). The scribe likewise seems to have added loose leaves in quire 17 to make room for Vercelli XXII, which, as we shall see in chapters 5 and 7, shares themes in common with the final three items of the manuscript, and may have been chosen specifically to satisfy this unity.²⁵ This very different reading from Scragg's concerning the arrangement of the manuscript shows the collector (or scribe) as being not so much careless or haphazard in his work, but rather continually engaged in the process of 'anthologizing,' or in the making of a collection that arguably displays discernible order with respect to both text and theme.

While such a case for 'intelligent design' can be made with regard to the manuscript as a whole, it remains to be seen whether the same degree of care and circumspection can be extended to all aspects of the manuscript's make-up. Especially telling are those 'problematic' textual repetitions found in Vercelli II and XXI, even though the extent and pattern of overlap is far from transparent, as Table 1 makes clear.²⁶

Even a cursory examination of this outline reveals that Vercelli II and XXI reflect greater differences in terms of style, structure, and content than they do similarities: while almost three-quarters of the lines in Vercelli II are replicated in Vercelli XXI, the shared material constitutes no more than a third of Vercelli XXI. The much larger Vercelli XXI gains the majority of its bulk through its development of two main rhetorical features: the homily alternates between general exhortation and catalogues

enumerating vices, virtues, modes of behaviour, and future conditions. The five catalogues common to Vercelli II and XXI present grim visions that are evidently designed to terrify and encourage reform before the terrible Day of Judgment. While catalogues 6 [1] and 7 [2] (enumerating Judgment Day signs and terrors) form the rhetorical centrepiece in Vercelli II, in Vercelli XXI they constitute an integrated part of a much larger rhetorical pattern established by the sustained use of disparate inventories. The purpose of these catalogues in Vercelli XXI has been commented upon by James E. Cross, who states that ‘the whole homily was created as a fluent fusion of mnemonic lists and passages, probably collected and noted in preparation by the composer, yet with the obvious purpose that a congregation should retain at least some of the words and ideas within those memorable lists.’²⁷ To add to Cross’s evaluation, it may be seen that the twelve catalogues presented in Vercelli XXI, many of which are paralleled in Latin sources and analogues,²⁸ are used to create systematic antithesis between vice and virtue, sin and

Table 1 A comparison of the structure of Vercelli II and XXI

Section	Lines	Description
1	XXI.1–9	Exhortation to love God and one’s neighbours (XXI.1–4). <i>Catalogue 1: The eighteen attributes of the Lord (XXI.4–9).</i>
2	XXI.10–28	Reminder to be humble and shun pride; a castigation of the wealthy (XXI.10–18). <i>Catalogue 2: The fourteen types of sinners named in Cristes bocum [‘Christ’s books’] (XXI.18–28).</i>
3	XXI.29–56	Instruction to fast, pray to God, give alms, repent for sins, and follow God’s ways (XXI.29–47). <i>Catalogue 3: The twenty ‘ways of God’ (XXI.48–56).</i>
4	XXI.57–86	Recommendation to ‘clothe and adorn’ one’s soul with good works and virtues in order to avoid being cast into hell on the Day of Judgment (XXI.57–61). <i>Catalogue 4: The twelve mægenu (‘virtues or strengths’) of the soul (XXI.61–86).</i>
5	XXI.87–109	Instruction to consider God’s gift of salvation, and to hasten to repay God in exchange for the good works he has provided (XXI.87–100). <i>Catalogue 5: The twelve gifa and lac (‘gifts and sacrifices’) to be given to God (XXI.100–9).</i>
6	XXI.109–25	Exhortation to be earnest in the desire for salvation in order to exchange earthly delights for celestial comforts at the heavenly feast of patriarchs on Judgment Day.

7	XXI.126–57	Instruction to know the story of creation and the fall of the prideful angels from heaven, and to prepare for Judgment Day (XXI.126–57).
8 [1]	XXI.158–77 [= II.1–20]	General address to the audience [and in Vercelli XXI transition to the Doomsday material] (XXI.158–60 and II.1–2). <i>Catalogue 6 [1]: The seven signs of Doomsday (XXI.160–77 and II.2–20).</i>
9 [2]	XXI.178–206 [= II.24–7 and 31–55]	Description of Doomsday torments for the sinful, and admonition of present-day apathy towards future Judgment and the wiles of the Antichrist (XXI.178–88 and II.31–9). <i>Catalogue 7 [2]: The terrors of Doomsday (XXI.188–206 and II.39–55).</i>
10 [3]	XXI.207–18 [= II.56–68]	Foretelling of the extent of Doomsday terrors, and of the fate of the body and soul once separated (XXI.207–10 and II.56–60). <i>Catalogue 8 [3]: The wretched fates awaiting the soul in hell (XXI.211–18 and II.60–8).</i>
11 [4]	XXI.219–24 and 69–75	Reminder to be mindful of one's soul and to perform good deeds (XXI.219–20 and II.69–70). <i>Catalogue 9 [4]: The twenty sins established by devils (XXI.220–4 and II.70–5).</i>
12 [5]	XXI.224–37 [= II.75–81 and 108–11]	Exhortation to love God and one's neighbours, to be merciful and forgiving to others, and to be hopeful of God's forgiveness (XXI.224–33 and II.75–81). <i>Catalogue 10 [5]: The fourteen ways to work God's will (XXI.233–7 and II.108–11).</i>
13 [6]	XXI.237–52 and II.112–16	Exhortation to hasten to the heavenly kingdom (XXI.237–9 and II.112–16). <i>Catalogue 11: The joys of heaven (XXI.239–49).</i> <i>Catalogue 12: The fourteen types of blessed who are able to enter heaven (XXI.249–52).</i>
14 [7]	XXI.253–7 and II.116–19	Variant endings praising God and heaven.

Note: Passages in **bold** indicate portions of text that are common to both homilies; passages in *italics* comprise catalogues.

righteousness.²⁹ Thus, while Vercelli II generally stresses the inevitability of Judgment Day and the need for immediate reform, the hortatory recommendations found at the beginning of Vercelli XXI soften the overall tone of these judgment day terrors, and emphasize the ability of the audience to choose salvation.³⁰

In addition to structural, stylistic, and thematic differences between Vercelli II and XXI, the two homilies witness vastly different transmission histories. Vercelli II, for example, though not titled in the Vercelli Book for any specific occasion, receives the designation '[IN] DE DIE IVDICII' ('On the Day of Judgment') in several later manuscripts, suggesting its use *quando uolueris* ('whenever you like'). Apart from its closest parallel in Vercelli

XXI.158–249, four other versions of Vercelli II.1–66 appear as follows (again using Scragg’s *sigla*):³¹

- N CCCC 419, pp. 182–204;
- O Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 114, fols. 1r–4v;
- P BL, Cotton Cleopatra B. xiii, fols. 2r–7v;
- Xd CCCC 201, pp. 78–80.

In addition to the fact that all four of the above homilies are preserved in manuscripts that post-date the Vercelli Book, they are all also likely composed later than Vercelli II, since, as Scragg notes, they contain passages derived from Wulfstan, and other passages written in the style of Wulfstan.³² Scragg shows that Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 115 (fols. 140–7) also contains a partial version of Vercelli II.34–73, as well as select passages from the four homilies in the aforementioned **NOPXd**,³³ presenting what appears to be the latest extant version of the homily. Though a governing source has not been identified for the homily (and therefore also for the portions of Vercelli II common to Vercelli XXI), as Scragg points out, the Doomsday lists contained in catalogues 6 [1] and 7 [2] above are indicative of eschatological inventories found elsewhere in Old English literature, just as the subsequent list of sins in catalogue 9 [4] is reminiscent of registers found in confessionals.³⁴

By contrast, a variety of Latin sources and analogues have been identified for Vercelli XXI. Although untitled in the Vercelli Book, the homily has been assigned to the third day of Rogationtide, partially owing to its circulation together with Vercelli XIX and XX in other manuscripts (where they are labelled for Rogationtide), and to the common authorship of all three items.³⁵ A second classifying feature is the homily’s citation of practices commonly found in other Rogationtide homilies, highlighting (for example) the giving of alms, fasting, and the performance of penance.³⁶ Here, comparison with Vercelli XI–XIII (the first Rogationtide set in the manuscript), serves particularly well, since Vercelli XII, entitled *Spel to oðrum gangdæge* (‘sermon for the second day of Rogationtide’), similarly stresses the importance of prayer, procession with relics and holy objects, visits to shrines, fasting, and almsgiving (lines 1–8). Still further identification can be gained from a study of the homily’s sources. Vercelli XXI is

largely confectioned from a series of texts found in the St Père homiliary, witnessed most fully in the later Cambridge, Pembroke College 25, items 34, 77, 90, and 91, with extracts also translated from items 24, 25, 39, 40, 48 and 50. Though these items are set for a wide variety of occasions,³⁷ items 90 and 91 offer general sermons that may be used for Rogationtide, and item 40 is clearly labelled as a Rogationtide piece (also a source for Vercelli XIX). The comparison with the sources in Pembroke 25 are instructive for reconstructing the ‘purpose’ of Vercelli XXI, since the homiliary as a whole offers a clearly delineated liturgical program.

Beyond the influences woven together from the St Père homiliary, a few materials have been thought to derive from other sources, including possibly excerpts drawn from Caesarius of Arles’s *sermones* 199 and 158.³⁸ However, the more intriguing correspondences remain those between Vercelli XXI and several extant and putative passages of Old English poetry, some of which were identified only after the publication of Scragg’s edition. Since most of these passages have been discussed elsewhere and at great length (most recently and fully by Charles D. Wright),³⁹ it will serve to address briefly the shorter passages of ‘poetry’ and ‘rhythmical prose’ which appear in Vercelli XXI – though *not* in Vercelli II – in order to highlight the uncommonly rich tapestry of prosaic verse (or perhaps versified prose?) found in this Rogationtide homily. Below, I present all the identified ‘poetically inspired’ portions of Vercelli XXI, leaving out only the long Judgment Day catalogue common to Vercelli II.39–51 and XXI.188–206, which has been discussed most fully by Eric G. Stanley.⁴⁰ The commentary provided below is not intended exhaustively to engage the complex metrical and lexical debates that have surrounded these lines, but rather to present the passages as they appear in their most recently edited formats (incorporating emendations and alterations where they have been made by their editors). The passages in question are as follows:

1. Vercelli XXI.128–31

In what remains a formative (and still often debated) essay on the homiletic style of Wulfstan, and the wider effect of rhythmical prose in Old English texts, Angus McIntosh was the first to identify what he considered to be an example of ‘classical’ verse

in Vercelli XXI.128–31, as well as what has been labelled ‘debased’ or ‘alliterative prose’ in XXI.132–41, both of which he argues may have originally been derived from one or more now lost Old English sources.⁴¹ The passage of ‘genuine verse’ at Vercelli XXI.128–31 is laid out by McIntosh as follows:

We syndon deadlice men and to duste sceolon 1
on worulde wurðan wyrmum to æte
and of eorðan eft ealle arisan [MS *eorðan we sceolon eft*]
on domes dæge and drihtene sylfum
ætywan eall þæt we ær dydon. 5

[We are mortal men, and must become as dust in the world, as food for worms; and from the earth all will rise again on Doomsday, and the Lord himself will reveal all that we earlier performed]

The passage contains several phrases or formulas attested elsewhere in poetry, although it would seem that only two appear elsewhere as freestanding half-lines: line 3b *ealle arisan* occurs verbatim in *Andreas*, line 1623b, while line 5a occurs as the variant *ealle ætyweð* in *Christ III*, line 1056a. Other looser parallels can be found for some of the phrasing. For example, lines 2b–3a are echoed loosely in *Christ II*, lines 625–7 (emphasis mine) ‘*wyrmum* aweallen, þonan wites fyr / of þære *eorðan* scealt eft gesecan.’ As we will see in [chapter 5](#), the phrase *wyrmum to æte* (in line 2b) appears with some variation in *Soul and Body I*, lines 124b–5a and *Soul and Body II*. 119b–20a (‘*bið þonne wyrma gifel, æt on eorþan*’; here quoted from the Vercelli version). McIntosh’s view of these lines as constituting ‘poetry’ has been widely acknowledged, though certainly less fully discussed.⁴²

2. Vercelli XXI.141–9

Charles D. Wright has made an excellent case for the presence of an embedded poem in these lines, in the process of which he refines the theory put forward by McIntosh that these lines formed a looser twostressed rhythm in a style similar to that developed later by Wulfstan.⁴³ Wright’s reconstructed text, reflecting the changes he made to word order and syntax, is as follows (text in angle brackets are marked by Wright as containing readings that would produce better scansion if omitted):

þurh oferhyg < e > d < ness > e wurdon englas iu 1 [MS
englas wurdon]
 forsceapene to deoflum 7 bescofene eac
 on helle grund, þær hie sceolon
 on worulda woruld witu þolian,
 for ðam þe hie forhogedon heofona wealdend 5
 < 7 > sigora syllend, 7 him sylfum þær
 rice mynton. Ac him se ræd ne geþah,
 ac se stiðmoda cyning,
 < æl > mihtig dryhten, þone modigan feond
 awearp of ðam setle 7 of ðam wuldre eac 10 [MS*]
 < þæs > heofon < lic > a < n > rices ealle þa þe
 < mid him > æt ðam ræde wæron.
 Wiston hie þe geornor, witum besette [MS *Hie wiston*]
 on þære byrnendan helle,
 wið hwæne hie winnan ongunnon. 15

[*MS 9–10 ‘dryhten ælmihtig, awearp of ðam setle þone modigan feond’]

[Through pride angels were once transformed into devils and also thrust down into the abyss of hell, where they must forever suffer torments, because they despised the ruler of the heavens, giver of victories, and intended to make for themselves a kingdom there. But that plan did not succeed for them, but the resolute king, the mighty Lord, cast the proud demon from his seat and likewise from the glory of the kingdom of heaven all those who were in league with him. Placed in torments in burning hell, they knew the more surely against whom they had set out to fight.]⁴⁴

In surveying the formulaic phrasing of the poem, Wright concludes that the verse is ‘self-consciously poetical’ in its choice of diction, though more akin to the ‘prosaic poetry’ in terms of its metre.⁴⁵ It is perhaps noteworthy that within the Vercelli homilies, the only other large-scale run of embedded lines of poetry occurs at Vercelli X.101–10, also treating the theme of exile as God casts out the wicked souls from his presence (see [chapter 4](#), below).⁴⁶

3. Vercelli XXI.149–55

This brief passage in Vercelli XXI contains the clearest verbal correspondences between the homilies in the Vercelli Book and a surviving piece of Old English poetry. The poem in question is

often referred to as *An Exhortation to Christian Living*, which survives only in the eleventh-century manuscript CCCC 201 (pp. 160–7).⁴⁷ Fred Robinson has argued that this poem, together with the verse *A Summons to Prayer* that immediately follows it in the manuscript, forms part of a larger work that he has re-titled *The Rewards of Piety*. Since only the former poem shows conclusive parallels with Vercelli XXI,⁴⁸ the shortened title *Exhortation* is maintained, allowing easy reference to the standard edition in ASPR VI.⁴⁹ The relevant passages are as follows (layout mine, and with ***bold italics*** signalling parallel phrasing):

Exhortation, lines 1–15:

Nu lære ic þe swa man leofne sceal.
 Gif þu wille þæt blowende rice gestigan,
 þænne ***beo þu eadmod and ælmesgeorn,***
wis on wordum, and wæccan lufa
on hyge halgum on þas hwilwendan tid, 5
bliðe mode, and gebedum filige
oftost symle þær þu ana sy.
Forðan þæt halige gebed and seo hluttre lufu
godes and manna and seo ælmessylen
 and se miccla hopa to þinum hælende, 10
 þæt he þine synna adwæscan wylle,
and eac oþera fela
godra weorca glengað and bringað
þa soðfæstan sawle to reste
on þa uplican eadignesse. 15

[Now I will instruct you as a man must a dear one: if you wish to attain that flourishing kingdom, then ***be humble-minded, and willing with alms, wise in words, and with a cheerful heart love vigils in holy contemplation in this transitory time, and pursue prayers, most often continually, where you are alone. Because holy prayer, and the pure love of God and men, and the giving of alms,*** and the great hope in your saviour that he will extinguish your sins – ***these and also many other good works will adorn and bring the righteous soul to rest in that heavenly blessedness.***]

Vercelli XXI.149–55:

Ac uton ***beon eaðmode ⁊ ælmesgeorne ⁊ wise*** 50 ***on wordum ⁊*** on dædum
 eac, ***n*** uton ***bliðum mode on haligum hige wæccan lufian ⁊ gebedum fylgian***
 on þisse hwilwendan tide oftust þeah ***symle þær*** we æn lype ***beon. For þan***

*þæt halige gebed 7 seo hluttre lufu Godes ælmihtiges 7 seo ælmessylen þe
man for Gode gedeð 7 eac oðera feala godra weorca geglengaþ 7 gebringað
þa soðfæstan sawla on blisse 7 on wuldre on þære uplican eadignesse on
þam ytemestan dæge þysses woruldrices, þe dryhten on demeð æghwylcum
menn be his gewyrhtum.*

[But let us *be humble, and willing with alms, and wise in words*, and also in deeds, *and* let us *with a cheerful heart love vigils in holy contemplation, and most often pursue prayers in this transitory time*, though *continually where we are alone. Because holy prayer, and pure love of God, and the giving of alms*, which one does for God, *and also many other good works will adorn and bring the righteous soul* to bliss and to glory *in the heavenly blessedness* on the final day of this worldly-kingdom, on which the Lord judges each man according to his works.]

Though the overall relationship between the two passages is clear, minor differences appear in word order, vocabulary, alliteration, and scansion. Some of the variations in Vercelli XXI seem manifestly to reflect the passage's wider homiletic interests. For example, while *Exhortation*, lines 14–15 mentions the resting place of souls, the homily includes the additional detail of the soul's judgment, a comment that seems entirely fitting in the larger Doomsday context of the homily. Here, the homilist draws on at least one expression that appears elsewhere in his Rogationtide repertoire, since the phrase *ytemestan dagas* ('final days') is repeated in Vercelli XX.60. It seems likely that the homilist has here altered the source material to fit the larger homiletic context. The two passages also display important differences with respect to audience: while the poem employs a second-person singular address (spoken by an unidentified *hilderinc* ['grey warrior'; line 57a] to a youth), the homily uses the traditional first-person plural address. Here, however, a relative chronology is harder to establish.

The closeness of the passages in Vercelli XXI and *Exhortation* has provoked considerable debate as to whether the lines in Vercelli XXI derive from the poem, or whether the poem originates from the homily. The third possibility, that both pieces draw on a (perhaps no longer extant) third text, has not yet been addressed (but will be considered below). The main issues are as follows: Scragg takes the view that the poem was adapted imperfectly into the homily, while Cross postulates that the 'prose has been turned into verse, not that the prose is a "dilution" of

the verse.’⁵¹ Wright echoes Scragg concerning the direction of influence, and makes the compelling argument that it is ‘an improbable serendipity that would have enabled the versifier of *Exhortation* to construct three perfectly alliterating long lines (ll. 4–6, the first two with double alliteration in the on-verse) simply by transposing three phrases that happen to yield metrical “half-lines” yet are all mateless in the prose.’⁵² Although there are numerous tools available for testing just such relationships between Old English texts, even when no Latin source is known (namely, the investigation of archaisms, vocabulary belonging to different registers, and sometimes even orthographical and dialectal features),⁵³ none of these methods has proved satisfactory in ‘solving’ the relationship between Vercelli XXI and *Exhortation* (or indeed any of the other putative poetic vernacular sources behind the homily, if they ever existed).⁵⁴

However, a reconsideration of the broader framework in which these brief passages from *Exhortation* and Vercelli XXI appear may give us new cause to question the accepted relationship between the poem and the homily. Elsewhere, I have discussed the lexis, syntax, and structure of the poem preserved in CCCC 201, using these criteria to weigh the relative merits of the classifications ‘homiletic verse’ and ‘prosaic verse’ for the poem *Exhortation*.⁵⁵ As I point out in that study, the poem displays a particularly high incidence of ‘irregular’ verses (at least by classical standards), which can be measured (in part) both by absence of ‘classical’ alliteration (according to the types identified by Sievers or McIntosh),⁵⁶ and by missing half-lines.⁵⁷ Though such ‘deviations’ may be explained in part by the increased frequency of these verse types in late Old English poetry,⁵⁸ in the case of *Exhortation* the poem seems especially influenced by homiletic language. The latter scenario is supported by the poem’s saturated use of compounds that are otherwise unattested in poetry:⁵⁹ these include *ælmessylen* (‘almsgiving’; line 9b), *dyrnegeligere* (‘fornication’; 44b), *cyricsocn* (‘church attendance’; 48a), and *oferfyllo* (‘gluttony’; 77a), all of which appear with some frequency in prose, and especially homiletic contexts.⁶⁰

In applying this same perspective to the above passages cited from *Exhortation* 1–15 and Vercelli XXI.149–55, additional ‘prosaic’ influences can perhaps be detected. For example, it is

surely noteworthy that lines 2, 9, and 11 of *Exhortation* do not contain the kind of alliteration that is the hallmark of Old English verse, and that these ‘aberrations’ appear in precisely those portions that deviate from Vercelli XXI. The situation is compounded by the fact that line 9 would alliterate if line 9a were emended to read *godes ælmihtiges*, to follow the parallel passage in Vercelli XXI. Another striking feature is the preponderance of definite articles in the passage from *Exhortation* (*þæt ... seo ... seo ... se* ; lines 8–10), which match the parallel prose passage in Vercelli XXI, but are of the sort normally avoided in verse. These ‘effects’ (or ‘defects,’ depending upon one’s view) seem to show the breakdown of old metrical norms, beyond what might be expected in late Old English verse.

However, what escaped my attention in that earlier analysis is the fact that several further excerpts from the poem *Exhortation* contain hitherto unnoticed parallels with Vercelli XXI and also the extended Rogationtide sequence found in Vercelli XIX and XX (with the entire prose sequence having been allegedly composed by the same author). As we shall see, these parallelisms complicate the issue of borrowing considerably. The following passage from *Exhortation* lines 41–51, containing a list of *unþeawas* (‘sins’) can be compared with these Vercelli texts (here ***bold italics*** are used to signal parallel phrasing, while *plain italics* indicate looser topical parallels):⁶¹

Warna þe georne wið þære wambe fylle,
forþan heo þa unþeawas ealle gesomnað
þe þære saule swiðost deriað,
þæt is druncennes and dyrnegeligere,
ungemet wilnung ætes and slæpes ; 45
þa man ***mæg mid fæstenum***
and forhæfdnessum heonon adrifan,
and mid cyricsocnum cealdum wederum
eadmodlice eallunga biddan
heofena drihten þæt he þe ***hæl*** gife, 50
milde mundbora, swa him gemet þince.

[Be fully cautious against filling your stomach because it gathers all *those vices which most greatly harm the soul*, that is drunkenness and secret fornication, ***immoderate desire for food and sleep***, which one *is able* to drive

away with *fasts* and measures of *self-restraint* ; and with church-visits in cold weather (one is able) always to pray *humbly* to the Lord of the Heavens, that gentle protector, that he may give you *salvation* according to what seems fitting for him.]

The sins listed in *Exhortation* ‘þe þære saule swiðost deriað’ (‘which most greatly harm the soul’; line 43) poignantly echo the list of eight *heafodleahtas* (‘deadly sins’) in Vercelli XXI ‘þe singallice manna sawla wundiað’ (‘which singularly wound man’s soul’; Vercelli XX.59). One might compare, for example, *Exhortation*, line 45, which warns against ‘*ungemet wilnung ætes and slæpes*,’ with Vercelli XX. 69–70, on the sin of *gifernes* (‘greed’):

Ponne ys se oðer heafodleahter gecweden gifernes, seo ys *ungemetigende gewilnung* ægðer ge *ætes* ge *wætēs*.

[Then is the second capital sin called Greed, which is the *immoderate desire* for both *food* and *water*]

The homily’s source for this passage has been identified as Pembroke 25, item 93, which states that ‘corporale est secundum uitium quod est gula, quae est intemperans cybi et potus uoluptas’ (physical is the second sin, which is gluttony, that is the intemperate desire for food and drink).⁶² Though the collocation *ætes... slæpes* in *Exhortation* clearly differs from the expression contained in both Vercelli XX and the Latin source, it is intriguing to speculate whether the poem’s collocation could have resulted from a misreading (or even mishearing?) of the Latin *cybi et potus* (‘and for food and drink’) for *cybi et cubitus* (‘for food and lying down’) in the poet’s antecedent source. In Vercelli XX, the rhyming combination of *æt* and *wæt* is a commonplace, and in fact a favourite expression of the homilist (appearing again in Vercelli XIX.92 and XXI.31), while that of *æt* and *slæp* in *Exhortation* is unique (even if the general combination of eating, drinking, and sleeping is enshrined in the Benedictine Rule).⁶³ The parallelism between Vercelli XX and *Exhortation* is furthermore encouraged by the fact that just as *Exhortation* (lines 46–7) describes how ‘þa man *mæg mid fæstenum / and forhæfdnessum* heonon adrifan ’ (‘one is able to drive away [those vices] with fasts and measures of self-restraint’), the passage on greed in Vercelli XX.80–1 likewise ends with the

following suggestion for overcoming sin: ‘ ȝ þonne **mæg** seo *beon* selest *oferswiðed* þurh **fæsteno** ȝ þurh **forhæfednesse**’ (‘and then [avarice] **is able to be overcome** best through **fasting** and through **self-restraint**’). Here, the specialized language used to describe the sin of avarice in Vercelli XX appears rather more broadly in *Exhortation* as a means of describing all abuses resulting from extravagance.

Further congruencies may be argued for *Exhortation* lines 46–51, which prescribe the following temperate behaviours (emphasis mine):

þa man mæg **mid fæstenum** 64
and forhæfdnessum heonon adrifan,
and mid cyricsocnum cealdum wederum
eadmodlice ealluncga biddan
heofena drihten þæt he þe **hæl** gife,
milde mundbora, swa him gemet þince.

[**With fasts** and measures of self-restraint one is able to drive away [those vices]; **and with church-visits** in cold weather (one is able) always to pray **humbly** to the Lord of the Heavens, that gentle protector, that he may give you **salvation** according to what seems fitting for him.]

One might compare these lines especially with Vercelli XIX. 160–4, which present Bishop Mamertus’s exhortation to his congregation to observe Rogationtide practices, and their resultant reward for achieving temperance (verbal parallels are noted in **bold italics**, while *italics* denote textual echoes):

ȝ hie ða ealle swa dydon ȝ gesetton þa him betwinan þæt man a syððan
sceolde þas þry gangdagas healdan fullice **mid fæstenum** ȝ mid
ælmessylenum ȝ **mid cyricsocnum**, ȝ mid **eadmodlicum** gange ȝ mid
reliquiasocnum ȝ mid eallum godum weorcum. ȝ hie sona æt Gode
geearnodon ece **hæle** ȝ þæs færlīcan deaþes afyrrednesse.

[And they (the people of Vienne) all did so, and they established among themselves that one must always fully observe thereafter those three Rogation days **with fasts** and with almsgivings, **and with church-visits**, and with **humble** procession, and with visits to shrines and with all good works. And they immediately earned from God eternal **salvation** and the removal of sudden death.]

Though the double exhortation to engage in fasting and church

visits appears in a number of hortatory and homiletic contexts (especially in Wulfstan-related materials and homilies set for Rogationtide),⁶⁵ the order expressed in *Exhortation* seems particularly close to the parallel passage in Vercelli XIX (following the same general sequence *fæsten... cyricsocn... eadmod- ... hæl-*). Here again, the Latin source behind Vercelli XIX encourages the notion that the poet is drawing (again, perhaps at some remove) from a formulation derived from the Latin source for Vercelli XIX in Pembroke 25, item 40, which discusses the establishment of Rogationtide practices, celebrating especially ‘ieiunium cum humilitate et oratione et aelomosinus’ (‘fasting with humility and praying and almsgiving’) as an antidote to death and sickness.

In addition to these putative parallels between *Exhortation* and Vercelli XIX and XX, at least one further connection can be made between the poem and Vercelli XXI, which goes beyond the equivalences noted above. McIntosh first detected that Vercelli XXI.131–41 contains a passage of alliterative prose. Scragg repeats this view, stating that for this section, ‘alliteration ... suggests dependence upon a poem which has been lost.’ So far as I am aware, there has been no further treatment of these lines.⁶⁶ The passage in question appears as follows (again, ***bold italics*** signal parallel phrasing, although in this case doublets are in *plain italics* for emphasis):

Beoð þonne mid urum sawlum symle ece *earme oððe eadige*, swa hwæðer swa we her on worulde ær urum endedæge geearniað. ***Nu*** we ***sculon*** efestan gif we a willað þone uplican *eðel secan* ***⁊ urum sawlum gebeorgan.*** We ***sceolon*** symle herian heofones God, se us ***healdeð a wið feonda gehwæne.*** Gif we hine soðfæstlice mid eaðmettum ealling lufiað, witudlice he sylð þam ece blisse, *earmum ge eadigum*, þe hyt geearniað. Ði we eow lærað þæt ge eow wið unrihtthæmed georne beorgen, ***⁊ ge scyldað eow wið þa bealewan synne*** ***⁊ wendað eow to beteran cræfte, oferhygde fleoð*** ***⁊ unnytt word, æfste*** ***⁊ andan,*** for ðan seo oferhygdesse ys *for Gode* ***⁊ for worulde eallra cræfta wyrst.***

[We will then be with our souls always eternally *wretched or happy*, whatever we earn before our end-day here in the world. ***Now*** we ***must*** hasten if we always wish *to seek the homeland above and to protect our souls.* We ***must*** always praise the God of heaven, he who ***holds us away from every enemy.*** If we truly and with humility entirely love him, certainly he will give them eternal bliss, *to the wretched and the blessed*, as they earn it. Thus we teach you so that you may protect yourselves eagerly against

adultery, and shield yourselves against baleful sins, and turn yourselves to better works, flee *pride and useless words, envy and malice*, because pride is *for God and for the world* the worst of all works.]

Beyond the fact that the lines are broadly alliterative (especially in the portions containing doublets), a verbal echo can be detected between the above passages highlighted in bold (in Vercelli XXI. 133–5) and *Exhortation*, lines 64b–6a:

‘ *Nu* þu ðe ***beorgan scealt***,
and ***wið feonda gehwæne*** fæste ***healdan***
sauwle þine ’

[‘*Now* you *must protect yourself* and *against every enemy* hold fast *your soul* ’]

It is again notable that first-person plural references in Vercelli XXI appear as second-person singular references in *Exhortation*. Though no Latin source has yet been suggested for these lines in Vercelli XXI, it is clear that the author of Vercelli XXI either recognized these lines in a previous source as containing verse and adapted them, or else wanted the passage to sound ‘poetic,’ as indicated by his inclusion of the alliterative pairs *s ecan ... s awlum*, and, *h erian ... h eofones*, fleshing out the ‘h’ alliteration found also in the passage from *Exhortation*. The identification of this parallel with Vercelli XXI may also shed light upon an apparent metrical anomaly in the lines that follow directly in *Exhortation* 66–70, describing the need to protect one’s soul again the devil:

a hi winnað
embe þæt * * *
dæges and nihtes ongear drihtnes lif.
þu miht hy geflema, gif þu filian wilt
larum minum, swa ic ***lære*** þe 70

[Theny always fight about that ***day and night***, *against* the life of the lord.
You can set them to flight, if you wish to follow my ***teachings***, just as I teach you]

The phrase ‘swa ic lære’ in line 70 forms a perfect envelope pattern with the beginning of the poem, announcing the speaker’s intention ‘Nu lære ic þe swa man leofne sceal’ (‘Now I will teach

you as a man must a dear one'; line 1). This mirroring effect possibly supports the idea that *Exhortation* forms a separate poem from the adjacent *A Summons to Prayer* (against Robinson's thesis). However, the main reason for citing this passage is that line 66 lacks alliteration, while line 67 is metrically incomplete. Though it cannot be known whether the anomalous *embe þæt* forms a stray half-line in 67a, or a hypermetric verse with the previous line 66, the formulation remains oddly prosaic.⁶⁷ A very faint echo of this passage can perhaps be found in Vercelli XIX. 68–70: 'Utan þeah us georne wið deofol scyldan eallum tidum ȝ us *ongean* his yfelan *lara* Godes mildheortnesse biddan *dæg*es ȝ *niht*es. Se deofol *dæg*es ȝ *niht*es *winnð* *ongean* us mid his geleafleste' ('Let us nevertheless protect ourselves eagerly against the devil at all times, and against his evil teachings pray for God's mercy, day and night. The Devil strives against us day and night with his faithlessness'). Though the analogue is clearly too imperfect to suggest a direct link, the comparable syntax may help to indicate general prosaic interference in the poem.

No sources have been found for the majority of the poem *Exhortation*, and indeed may never be: I would argue, however, that there are sufficient specific parallels with the Rogationtide set in Vercelli XIX–XXI to demonstrate the poem's shared inspiration with these prose pieces. The fact that a series of Latin texts in the St Père homiliary have been proposed as sources for Vercelli XIX–XXI would seem at first to support the precedence of the homily, though such dependence is not yet conclusive. Since no governing antecedent has yet been established for the long passage discussed by McIntosh in Vercelli XXI.149–55 and *Exhortation*, lines 1–15, it is not impossible that both drew upon an independent poem, perhaps even based upon a still undetected Latin passage in the St Père homiliary, or an intermediary Old English poem confected from it (perhaps addressing the eight deadly sins and their consequences). The admittedly complicated idea of an independent (and perhaps versified) source may nevertheless explain why no fewer than four consecutive passages of poetically inspired material have been detected in Vercelli XXI.128–31, 131–41, 141–9, and 149–55, and why numerous additional parallels can now be seen between Vercelli XIX–XXI and the poem *Exhortation*. Though it may at first seem strange to imagine that the poet of *Exhortation* would turn (especially) to

Rogationtide materials for a poem in which a *har hilderinc* ('grey warrior') advises a younger man on proper Christian living, it is just possible that the broader catechetical setting may have held special appeal.⁶⁸ This connection would certainly seem to lend credence to the argument put forward by Whitbread and Caie that the address to the singular *leofne* ('Dear man,' or perhaps 'Dear one') in the opening line of *Exhortation* is reminiscent of the homiletic *men þa leofestan* ('Dearest men' or 'Dearest people'), while the use of the .N. in *þænne gemiltsað þe, .N.* ('then he will have mercy on you, N'; in *Exhortation*, line 83) seems evocative of the dynamic between confessor and penitent.⁶⁹ Even if the suggested links are not accepted in every detail, the comparison underscores (in ways that are often too impressionistically insinuated) the permeability between 'wisdom' poetry and homiletic discourse, the study of which would undoubtedly enrich our vocabulary for articulating such cross-pollinations. Looking beyond the narrow context of the relationship between *Exhortation* and Vercelli XIX–XIX, the presence of so many poetically tinged passages in Vercelli XXI likewise presents one of the strongest models to date for the early use of rhythmical prose, of the type later adapted (with variation) in the homilies of Ælfric and Wulfstan in the generation(s) to come.⁷⁰ It is pleasing to think that Vercelli XXI, or a text like it, may have acted as a stimulus for just such stylistic inspiration in the works of Ælfric and Wulfstan.

In the space remaining, the chapter will explore the portions of text common to Vercelli II and XXI, since this 'overlapping' has been so central to commentary about the make-up of the manuscript. Despite the preservation of Vercelli II and XXI in the same manuscript, it has been notoriously difficult to establish a plausible stemma that would explain the textual link between these homilies. Scragg, having examined both orthographic and phonetic variants, argues that although Vercelli II does not appear to be the immediate source for Vercelli XXI,⁷¹ the two homilies seem to share an antecedent.⁷² In considering how both texts came to appear in the same manuscript, Scragg has proposed the following scenario: he places the author of these four homilies and the Vercelli scribe at same scriptorium in 'Canterbury during Dunstan's Pontificate (959–988).'⁷³ Scragg further suggests that the author of Vercelli XXI must have had a

version of II ‘very like the copy which was used by the Vercelli scribe, perhaps indeed the same copy,’ and that this same copy was passed independently to the Vercelli scribe, who unwittingly copied both Vercelli II and XXI into the manuscript.⁷⁴ Though Scragg’s hypothesis is certainly possible, it is not especially convincing, since it relies upon the double factor of the author and scribe being in contact, as well as the general disorderliness of the compiler, who, according to the present analysis, has proved a careful editor in other respects. It seems more likely that the scribe or compiler simply viewed Vercelli II and XXI as two separate compositions, a view further endorsed by the aforementioned analysis of the rhetorically rich passages found independently in this homily. Alternatively, since Vercelli II and XXI appear in separate ‘booklets’ or ‘groups,’ it may also be possible that the two homilies were not originally intended to be bound together; but here again, the occurrence does not reflect the incompetence of either compiler or scribe so much as a change in plan.

In the interest of treating more fully the perceived rhetorical differences between Vercelli II and XXI, a brief analysis is provided below of the portions of text common to both homilies. The comparison reveals the degree to which even close variations of the same base text can be manipulated to yield evocative rhetorical differences. One qualitative difference between the two homilies is that Vercelli II contains numerous passages that chastise or admonish its audience, while there are few such reprimands in Vercelli XXI (presumably due either to the homilist’s rejection of these passages or to their omission in the exemplar). One such passage, present in Vercelli II.20–4, but absent in Vercelli XXI, castigates present-day apathy towards Christian responsibility:

Hwæt, þonne þinceð þam synfullan þæt noht ne sie þæs hates ne þæs
cealdes, ne þæs heardes ne þæs hnesces, ne þæs leofes ne ðæs laðes, þæt
hine þonne mæge fram dryhtnes lufan adon 7 his willan ascadan, 7 nu
nellap his willan wyrcean nu we eaðe magon!

[Lo, then it will seem to the sinful that nothing is so hot, nor so cold, nor so hard, nor so soft, nor so dear, nor so hated, that it may take him away from the love of the Lord and separate him from His will, and (yet) now we are unwilling to work His will, now that we easily can!]

The four variant texts for Vercelli II witnessed in Scragg's manuscripts **NOPXd** provide comparable readings, though these manuscripts add two alliterative pairs (quoted here from the **N** version: 'ne þæs wraðes ne þæs wynsumes ne þæs eaðes ne þæs earfoðes' ['nor so terrible nor so pleasant, nor so easy, nor so difficult']), so extending the list of Doomsday perils.

The absence of the passage in Vercelli XXI is interesting for one main reason: up to this point in Vercelli II and XXI, the catalogues enumerating the signs of Doomsday have been largely forward-looking, a technique highlighted by the repetition of the words 'on ðam dæge' ('on that day') before each sign. In the above passage from Vercelli II, however, the text manifestly breaks away from this pattern in order to treat those present-day tribulations that are held to be responsible for future hell-torment. Comparison with parallels contained elsewhere in the extant corpus reveals precisely the formulaic nature of these punishments: the (hardly surprising) contrasting pair *hates ... cealdes* echoes, for example, a passage in *Christ and Satan* (lines 131a), where the doublet *hat ... ceald* appears in Satan's lament on the torments of hell, and also the passage in *The Seafarer* where the speaker bemoans the hot and cold extremes of exile (lines 8b–11a). The severity of these landscapes carries over to Judgment Day literature with similar effect, as can be seen in *Judgment Day II*, lines 191–3, where the polarities of hot and cold again appear.⁷⁵ In each case, the collocation *hat ... ceald* signals environmental extremes of intemperance, a feature that so commonly demarcates woeful variance from the heavenly ideal in Old English literature.⁷⁶ Though it remains unclear whether the passage has been omitted from XXI or added to Vercelli II, it may be the case that the adjacent passage in Vercelli XXI.178–81, which describes how the sinful must wander from the visage of the Lord, from his saints, and from the glory of the heavenly kingdom to the torments of hell, was perceived by the homilist to be sufficiently austere for the homily's Rogationtide setting.⁷⁷ Given the homilist's penchant for antithetical catalogues, it is perhaps instructive that a similar inventory containing oppositional doublets appears at the end of Vercelli XXI.239–49 (in a passage not present in Vercelli II), where the same configuration is used to enumerate heavenly joys. Here, the formula 'x without y' signals, as it does in so many homilies, the

inverse condition of pleasures to come.⁷⁸

Another marked departure between Vercelli II and XXI can be seen in a passage describing the devil's seduction of sinners, which appears in Vercelli II.27–31, but is absent in Vercelli XXI:

Eala hwæt, [manna] mod syndon earmlice aþist[r]ode þæt hie æfre lætan
sculon þæt deapberende dioful hie on unnyttre geswipurnesse hie to þam
gedwellan þæt hie synne fremmen 7 þæs willan ne wyrceaþ, þe hie on
eorþan gesceop 7 mid his gaste geliffæste 7 him ecce lif forgeaf.

[Alas, indeed, the minds [of men] are wretchedly darkened so that they
always must allow that death-bearing devil to lead them astray in useless
cunning so that they commit sin and do not work the will of the One who
created them on the earth and with His spirit quickened them and gave
them eternal life.]

While Förster maintains the manuscript reading *aþristode* ('emboldened'), a word that occurs elsewhere only once in two copies Wærferth's translation of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*,⁷⁹ Scragg emends to *aþistode* ('darkened') in accordance with the four homilies in manuscripts **NOPXd**.⁸⁰ Scragg's emendation is suitable on thematic grounds as well, since the connotation of 'darkening' arguably carries special resonance in Judgment Day literature, where the darkening of celestial bodies regularly appears as a Doomsday sign. In the example from Vercelli II, the dimming of minds can thus be taken as an example of transference, which may be used to add visceral terror to the description. Parallels for this type of transference may be found elsewhere in poetry. In *The Meters of Boethius* XX.263b–6, for example, the poet describes the darkening of sense in the one who strays away from the light of truth: 'Fæder engla, todrif / þone piccan mist þe þræge nu / wið þa eagan foran usses modes / hangode hwyle, hefig and þystre' ('Father of angels, drive away the thick mist which, for a time now, has hung heavy and dark before the eyes of our spirit').⁸¹ In *Elene*, line 306a, Cynewulf likewise uses the term *modblinde* ('blind in spirit') to describe those who cannot distinguish between falsehood and the truth ('lige wið soðe'; line 307a), light and dark ('leoht wið þystrum'; line 307b), malice and mercy ('æfst wið are'; line 308a).⁸² The description of dimming minds within an increasingly darkened landscape likewise generates a type of pathetic fallacy found

elsewhere in Judgment Day compositions. A parallel may be found in the poem *Judgment Day II*, lines 99–103 (with some variation in the related homily *Be domes dæge* in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 113, fols. 68r–70v, a text derived, like the poem, from the Latin *De die iudicii*), where the quaking of the earth and the collapse of the landscape on Doomsday is reflected in the description of the minds of men: ‘Eall eorðe bifað, eac swa þa duna / dreosað and hreosað, / and beorga hliðu bugað and myltað, / and se egeslica sweg ungerydre sæ / eall manna mod miclum gedrefeð’ (‘all the earth will tremble, also so the hills will fall and perish, and the slopes of mountains will bend and melt, and the terrible noise of the raging sea will greatly trouble all the minds of men’).⁸³

Though the passage on spiritual blindness does not appear in Vercelli XXI, other examples of transference (in passages common to Vercelli II) deliver comparable effect. In Vercelli XXI.190–1 and 191–2 (and also Vercelli II. 40 and 41), respectively, the description of the *þunorrada cyrm* (‘cry of the thunder’),⁸⁴ and *þa grangendan gesceafta* (‘groaning creation’) ostensibly perform a similar rhetorical function.⁸⁵ But one difference is noteworthy: while the earlier description of the spiritual blindness is used to admonish, these latter examples (still conventional in their formulation) arguably serve to personalize the terror and to encourage quick reform.

Differences between Vercelli II and XXI may also be seen at the level of structure, particularly in the case of their shared catalogues. A case in point is catalogue 9 [4], expounding the twenty sins established by devils in XXI.219–24 and II.69–75. The following items are given in the order in which they appear in the manuscript, using boldface to indicate when the sequence is precisely the same in both texts:

Homily II.69–75:⁸⁶

1. **morþor**
2. **man**
3. **oferhydyg**
4. **æfeste**
5. **idel gilp**
6. **unrihtwisnessa**
7. **unrihthæmeda**
8. **ærætas**
9. **ealogalnesse**
10. **dysinessa**
11. gedwollcræftas
12. **gitsunga**
13. gifernessa
14. leasunga
15. licettunga
16. tælnessa
17. twyspræcnessa
18. niðas
19. nearoðancas
20. heamolscipas
21. **eall[e] þa þeawa[s] þe dioflu**
on him sylfum onstealdon

Homily XXI.219–24:⁸⁷

1. **mordðor**
2. **man**
3. **oferhigdo**
4. **æfsta**
5. **idelne gylp**
6. **unrihtwisnessa**
7. **unrihthæmedo**
8. **ærætas**
9. **ealugalnessa**
10. **disignessa**
11. gifernessa
12. **gytsunga**
13. leasunga
14. liccettunga
15. talnessa
16. niðas
17. nearuþancas
18. gedwollcræftas
19. twyspræcnessa
20. **ealle þa þeawas þe deoflu**
on him astealdon

Incongruities between long catalogues, such as those listed above, are often explained as the work of careless, or maybe even self-monitoring, scribes actively thinking over the lists of sins confessed in prayer. Such an explanation must, of course, be entertained here. Yet, if the received hypothesis is to be maintained that Vercelli II and XXI shared a close antecedent, a pattern may be detected in the different order of items appearing in these texts.⁸⁸ The catalogue in Vercelli II, for example, presents a tightly alliterative structure, while that in Vercelli XXI appears occasionally to sacrifice alliteration in order to promote greater rhetorical resonance with other key passages in the homily. For example, in the catalogue in Vercelli XXI, many of the words shown here in boldface echo back to themes introduced earlier in the text: the sins of *oferhigdo* ('pride'), *æfsta* ('envy'), and *unrihthæmedo* ('fornication') all recall examples of sinners introduced in catalogue 2 (XXI.18–28); here, reference is made to *ofermodigum* ('the proud'; XXI.20), *unrihthæmerum* ('adulterers'; XXI.21), and *andigum* ('envious people'; XXI.23),

who number among the fourteen types of sinners named in *Cristes bocum*.⁸⁹ The homilist also seems to promote items in the list that perhaps are more relevant to the homily as a unit. For example, the sins of *æwæt* ('breaking fasts early') and of *ealugalnessa* ('drunkenness') recall earlier exhortations to fast and refrain from drinking in Vercelli XXI.29–32. Still others, like the sins of *gytsunga* ('avarice'; XXI.78) and *idelne gylp* ('vain boasting'; and *idelwuldor* in XXI.68) are mentioned in catalogue 4 (XXI.57–86), which lists the twelve *mægen* ('virtues or strengths') of the soul. By the same logic, the homilist may have demoted sins that have no prior connection with themes expressed in Vercelli XXI (for example *gedwollcræftas* ['magical arts'], placed just before *twyspræcnessa* ['double-speech']). The idea of a homilist 'tailoring' his source has elsewhere been made by Charles D. Wright for the first Rogationtide sequence in Vercelli XI–XIII. Though his arguments are derived from very different circumstantial evidence, his approach sets an interesting precedent for this type of editorial practice.⁹⁰

This methodology is even more pronounced in catalogue 10 [5] (XXI.233–7 and II.108–11), which lists the fourteen ways to work God's will. The first eight items of the list appear in the same order, with the exception of *snotre* ('wise'), which is omitted in Vercelli XXI: *soðfæste* ('true'), *mildheorte* ('merciful'), *rummode* ('generous'), *rihtwise* ('righteous'), *ælmesgeorne* ('eager for alms'), *clænheorte* ('pure-hearted'), *fremfulle* ('useful'), and *godfyrhte* ('God-fearing'). That the orthography of these items is nearly identical in both homilies provides fuel for the argument that the homilies were derived from a close or identical exemplar.⁹¹ However, after this run of eight matching adjectives, the catalogues present items in a different order:

Homily II.110–11:⁹²

1. larsume
2. þeowfæste
3. gehyrsume Gode 7 urum hlafordum
4. gepyldige Godes willan

Homily XXI.235–6:⁹³

1. gesybbsume
2. geþwære
3. gepyldige
4. eaðmode
5. þeawfæste
6. gehyrsume ure ælc oðrum
on godum þingum

The only attribute that is entirely absent from Vercelli XXI is *larsume* ('willing to learn'), which, like the aforementioned *snottre*

(‘wise’), appeals to knowledge. That a similar omission may be seen in catalogue 3 (XXI.49–56), where Vercelli XXI substitutes ‘his willan wyrcað oð hira endedæg’ (‘they shall work his will until their end-day’) for the Latin ‘studium scientiae legis dei’ (‘zeal for knowledge of the law of God’), may be indicative of a thematic pattern.⁹⁴ In each case, good works and deeds are prioritized over knowledge (though ironically, the homilist of Vercelli XXI himself makes three references to book sources at Vercelli XXI.20, 36, and 159). If such changes were in fact introduced by the Vercelli XXI homilist, they may reflect his desire to shape his sermon better to suit Rogationtide, since in most literatures for the fast-day period there is a pronounced emphasis on active piety, as can be seen from the exhortations pertaining to fasting, prayer, and procession with relics.⁹⁵

However the clearest manipulation of items contained in catalogue 10 [5] appears in the last two lines of the inventory: whereas in Vercelli II the final virtue is listed as being ‘gepyldige Godes willan’ (‘patient for the will of God’), the final asset in Vercelli XXI advocates being ‘gehyrsume ure ælc oðrum on godum þingum’ (‘each of us obedient to the other in good things’). In Vercelli XXI the emphasis shifts from God to ‘neighbours,’ apparently in order to accentuate the recurring exhortation in the homily to ‘love our neighbours as ourselves.’ This theme occurs two other times in Vercelli XXI, with varying emphases, at XXI.78–82 and XXI.224–7 (only this occurrence is included in Vercelli II.77–9). These passages in turn refer back to the opening of the homily, which discusses every person’s responsibility to love his neighbours (Vercelli XXI.1–4):⁹⁶

Men ða leofestan, us ys mycel þearf þæt we God lufien of eallre heortan ⁊ of eallre sawle ⁊ of eallum mægene; ⁊ syððan ure þa nehstan, þæt syndon ealle cristene menn, utan hie lufian eall swa us sylfe.

[Dearest people, there is great need for us that we love God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength; and afterwards our neighbours, who are all Christian men, let us love them all as ourselves]

The four-time occurrence of this exhortation in Vercelli XXI arguably functions as a leitmotif that, when placed at strategic moments, has a centring rhetorical effect that unites the Doomsday segments to the rest of Vercelli XXI. The same seems

to be true of the various negative developments of this theme, such as those contained in XXI.207–10 and II.55–60. The passage in Vercelli XXI reads:

La hwæt, we us ne ondrædað þæt we dæghwamlice geseoð beforan urum
eagun ure neahstan sweltan, ⁊ þonne þa[m] lichoman byþ ladic leger
gegyred, innan þære cealdan eorðan gebrosnad, ⁊ þæt læne lic gerotaþ to
fulnesse, ⁊ þam wæslitendum wyrmum to æte.

[O indeed, we do not fear that we see our neighbours dying daily before our eyes; and then a loathly grave will be prepared for the body, (which is) decayed in the cold earth, and that transitory body will rot to foulness and become as food for the corpse-rending worms.]

The graphic description of death in both homilies recalls poetic and homiletic versions of the soul's address to the body.⁹⁷ However, in Vercelli XXI, the discussion of the fate of one's neighbours serves the double purpose of reminding the audience once again to adhere to Matthew's famous injunction in 22:39.

But if there is a single epitomizing feature that distinguishes the style of Vercelli XXI from Vercelli II, it can be found in the homilist's regular employment of highly choreographed modes of antithesis. In the dexterous hand of this homilist, eschatological materials are never included as an 'end' unto themselves, but always as a 'means' to embellish and fortify other concerns in the homily. For example, catalogue 11, which enumerates the joys of heaven (in XXI.239–49), presents a fitting contrast with catalogue 6 [1], recording the seven signs of Doomsday (in XXI.160–77 and II.2–20), and together these catalogues encapsulate the extremes of terror and delight.⁹⁸ In other passages the same effect is used to bridge several ideas at once. For example, Vercelli XXI.239–40 begins the thought that in heaven 'þær is leoht ealles leohtes, þær is se eca gefea, þær is seo ece torhtnes eallra engla' ('there is the light of all lights, there is eternal joy, there is the eternal brilliance of all angels'), while Vercelli XXI.243–5 adds that in heaven 'þær is leoht butan þysstrum' ('there is light without darkness'),⁹⁹ and that there is 'wundorlic beorhtnes leohtre [þonne þære] sunna[n] beorhtnes' ('wondrous brightness brighter than the brightness of the sun'). Both statements, in turn, contrast descriptions in Vercelli XXI.164–5 and II.6–7, which reveal that 'on ðam dæge þæs myclan domes, gewit sunnan leoht ⁊ monan

leoht ȝ þa leoht eallra tungla' ('on that day of the great Judgment the light of the sun, the light of the moon, and the light of all the stars will depart').¹⁰⁰

On occasion, the homilist of Vercelli XXI employs antithesis at the level of individual clause-structures. Catalogue 11 (in Vercelli XXI.239–49) presents an interesting case in point as it splices together a nearly verbatim translation of two Latin sources:¹⁰¹ as Cross demonstrates, the source for the list of the joys of heaven is Pembroke 25, item 25 (fol. 52v), while the source for the enumeration of the blessed who reside with Christ is Pembroke 25, item 18 (fol. 113v). The first four items in the catalogue employ the formula *þær is* + a noun describing the delights of heaven, while the next seven items contain the formula 'x without y' (building an opposition between what is pleasant and disagreeable). A further turn comes in the subsequent sequence as the homilist uses the particle *butan* ('except' or 'without') to juxtapose contrasting positive and negative elements (XXI.241–4), while the final six elements return to a resplendent view of heaven using the formula *þær* + a verb in the present tense.¹⁰² According to Hildegard Tristram, not only are there numerous parallels for each of the above constructions in Old English prose and verse catalogues of this nature, but there are also parallels for the type of generic amalgamation presented in homily XXI.¹⁰³

The integration of this latter catalogue into Vercelli XXI is especially interesting for the reason that although this type of inventory is popular in prose and poetry, as Bazire and Cross point out in reference to a different Rogationtide homily (in CCCC 162, 422–31),¹⁰⁴ this type of affirmative ending does not generally occur in Judgment Day homilies.¹⁰⁵ The homilist's incorporation of the catalogue of heavenly joys after the Judgment Day material found in Vercelli II shows his genius for weaving together these very different genres. One might even say that without these well-chosen inventories, the transition between the Rogationtide and Judgment Day materials would seem abrupt and perhaps rough. Though the majority of these catalogues are translations or adaptations of other sources, the homilist's skilful selection and placement of them proves crucial to the success of the homily at large. As Paul Szarmach points out, 'When a homilist uses traditional motifs and themes with a

rhetorical purpose and design, he is using an author's pen, not "scissors and paste."106

Coming back to the question of the place of Vercelli II and XXI within the Vercelli Book, one might argue that the presence of such significant and (on occasion, apparently authorial) differences between Vercelli II and XXI 'justifies' (if 'justification' is truly required) the recurrence of such large-scale materials within the same homiletic collection. Rather than suppose happenstance with regard to the repetition of text in Vercelli II and XXI, a bolder hypothesis would be to reason that the compiler elected to include both Vercelli II and XXI precisely because the alliterative lines that make up the Doomsday registers in both homilies importantly 'catalogue most of the imagery traditional to the accounts of the Last Judgment.'107 By placing variant versions of the same catalogue both at the beginning and at the end of the compilation, the anthologist effectively 'book-ends,' or creates an 'envelope' around, the collection with these prototypical Doomsday catalogues.108 A fitting model for the specific application of this rhetorical device to links forged between texts in the same manuscript was promoted by Colette Stévanovitch in her work on the relationship between the poems contained in the Junius manuscript, and in particular between *Genesis A* and *B*, which demonstrates the wider applications of repetition as a structural device between items in a single manuscript.109 The 'envelope pattern' has also been applied successfully to parallels within individual poetic texts. John D. Niles's use of the expression 'envelope pattern' to describe the structure and unity of *Beowulf* in some ways establishes an even closer parallel for the type of repetition that seems to occur in the Vercelli Book.110 Just as the structural repetition in *Beowulf* suggests both return and the completion of a journey,111 so too may the repetition of materials in Vercelli represent and enable spiritual passage and resolution. This 'passage' rests not only on the repetition of the Doomsday items found in Vercelli II and XXI, but also upon the thematic interlace of items arguably to be found in the two final items that follow Vercelli XXI: just as the themes in the first part of Vercelli XXI anticipate the Doomsday materials in the second, Vercelli XXI as a unit anticipates the formidable plight of the damned souls in Vercelli XXII,112 and the spiritual struggle of Guthlac tempted by

devils in XXIII.¹¹³ Moreover, the ‘book-ending’ effect created by the repetition of materials in Vercelli II and XXI is strengthened by the fact that Vercelli III and XX contain a comparable example of textual repetition, in that ‘like Vercelli III, [XX] builds its main theme around a numerical construct, in this case a catalogue of the eight capital sins based on Alcuin’s catalogue in *De uirtutibus et uitiiis*. This catalogue also occurs in III; but III simply lists the sins without explaining them.’¹¹⁴ Mapped in this way, the sequence of Vercelli II and III as set against the repetition of items in XX and XXI creates what may be thought of as a concentric-circular effect that serves to reinforce items introduced at the beginning and ends of the manuscript.

This view of the structure would seem to suggest that the timely repetition of the Judgment Day catalogue in Vercelli XXI would have had particular appeal for a reading audience, because the symmetry of this structure works diachronically to recall themes earlier introduced in the collection. Though the imagined rejoinder to this argument would be that no single reader could peruse the whole of the homiletic collection in a single sitting, there are two responses to be offered. The first is that the Vercelli Book has in all recent analyses been treated as a book for private devotion and meditation, so that it may be presumed that a certain familiarity with the contents of the manuscript could be achieved over time. But it is also important to acknowledge that the ‘writerly’ intentions of the compiler need not match the ‘readerly’ use of the manuscript. The compiler may indeed have sown connections between texts that are not immediately obvious to the casual (or indeed modern) observer.

As we have seen, there are differences between Vercelli II and XXI large enough to warrant their repetition within the same homiletic collection. Though we may not value these same aesthetic standards today, our modern textual biases should perhaps be irrelevant in our judgment on this issue. As Paul Szarmach states, ‘What source or textual critics might see as a pastiche could very well have a unity obscured by a critic’s over-concern with the antecedent parts of the whole.’¹¹⁵ Once we begin to challenge the compiler’s decision to include Vercelli II and XXI, then we might as well challenge his incorporation of two Rogationtide collections, two Christmas homilies, or any

other seeming redundancy. Vercelli II and XXI offer evidence that although we have developed a discourse to describe intertextuality and the ‘eventful text,’¹¹⁶ we have not yet fully understood the bounds and depths of repetition in Anglo-Saxon composition.

It is precisely these artistic ‘bounds’ that will be tested further in the following chapter, which will explore a similar set of extra-textual stylistic and rhetorical connections between Vercelli X and its known Latin sources. Numerous stylistic links are also discussed between Vercelli XXI and X, both in the manner in which they draw from multiple Latin sources and in their arguable borrowings from vernacular poetry.¹¹⁷ But while Vercelli XXI presents an essentially rigid pattern of exhortation and catalogues enumerating vices and virtues, Vercelli X exhibits a much wider range of rhetorical techniques adopted and adapted from both Latin and vernacular sources and influences. In the following chapter, rhetorical devices such as ‘envelope patterning,’ ‘incremental repetition,’ and the use of ‘poetically inspired’ prose as a means of differentiating voice, will be discussed not so much as a means to link disparate homilies, but rather as a way of illuminating the formal artistry of Vercelli X.

4 ‘Where Are They Now?’: The Sources and Techniques of Adaptation and Compilation in the Vercelli Book

Writing at the end of the ninth century in the preface to his translation of Augustine’s *Soliloquies*, the author generally purported to be King Alfred the Great fashions a vivid and celebrated image that explains his perceived role not simply as a translator, but as a transformer of inherited texts.¹ In an elaborate conceit, Alfred (if indeed it is he) describes the process as being much like that of a builder constructing a house.² He writes:³

Gaderode me þonne kigclas and stuþansceaftas, and lohsceaftas and hylfa to ælcum þara tola þe ic mid wircan cuðe, and bohtimbru and bolttimbru, and, to ælcum þara weorca þe ic wyrcan cuðe, þa wlitegostan treowo be þam dele ðe ic aberan meihte. ne com ic naþer mid anre byrðene ham þe me ne lyste ealne þane wude ham brengan, gif ic hyne ealne aberan meihte; on ælcum treowo ic geseah hwæthwugu þæs þe ic æt ham beþorfte.

[I then gathered for myself poles and posts, and shafts and handles for each of those tools that I knew how to work with, and house-lumber and building-lumber, and, for each of those creations that I knew how to create, (I gathered) the most beautiful trees from the selection which I was able to carry. Nor did I ever come home with any load without desiring to bring home the whole forest, if I could carry it all. On each tree I saw something that I needed at home.]

What is perhaps most striking about the image is that, according to Alfred, translation never amounts to a straightforward rendering of a single text; rather it requires a dense network of borrowings and allusions that draw simultaneously upon discrete materials. It also results in a building that is more than the sum of its parts. Since the brief overview of sources in [chapter 2](#) revealed the extent to which the Vercelli homilies are reliant upon previous Latin and vernacular sources, it may be that this same apt metaphor can be used to illuminate the task of the Old English homilist, who must combine that which is found with that which is newly conceived.⁴

As the previous chapter demonstrated, the shared portions of text between Vercelli II and XXI, together with those links

established between Vercelli XXI and several known and putative Old English poems, throw into sharp relief the importance of seeking not just Latin sources, but also vernacular paradigms, for influence in the Vercelli Book. As we shall see again in [chapter 5](#), when we turn to Vercelli XXII and its sources and analogues, both models are crucial for illuminating the content as well as style and rhetoric of individual homilies in the collection.⁵ The present chapter takes a different approach, as it examines the intersection between a single homily and a compendium of known Latin sources, on the one hand, as well as a rather less easily containable nexus of associations with vernacular poetic styles. Vercelli X is especially suitable for this kind of study, as the homily shares a concern for patterns of repetition and sound-play with many vernacular Old English poems, including, notably, several of those contained in the Vercelli Book itself.⁶ In speaking here of the ‘sources’ of Vercelli X, then, we shall be addressing not only the extent to which the author remained more or less faithful to the content and rhetoric of Latin texts on which he so evidently draws, but also the degree to which he embellished his prose with ornamental devices more frequently associated (in current critical debates) with Old English verse.

Vercelli X survives in whole or in part in no fewer than nine copies, making it one of the most widely circulating homiletic compositions to survive from Anglo-Saxon England (at least outside Ælfric’s blanket program).⁷ The popularity of the homily is due in part to its magisterial skill, which Paul E. Szarmach has recently characterized as follows: ‘The long popularity of Vercelli X is not without reasonable warrant, for if the title “Vercelli Master” is to be accorded to the writer of any of the twenty-three pieces, the author of Vercelli X is surely the odds-on favorite.’⁸ The unifying message behind Vercelli X is simple, as it focuses on the castigation of excessive wealth and greed and the transience of earthly pleasures. However, the homily’s prismatic complexity arises from the numerous and variegated rhetorical strategies brought to bear within it: the homily contains a montage of techniques including the use of dramatic dialogues, poetic cadences, paranomastic puns, and vivid doomsday scenes. A bare-bones summary of the homily is as follows, based upon the divisions provided by Donald G. Scragg:⁹

X.1–8: ‘the spiritual value of reading and listening to the Gospel’;¹⁰

X.9–54: the Incarnation, salvation, and the avoidance of damnation;

X.55–110: the Last Judgment (loosely based on Paulinus of Aquileia);¹¹

X.111–21: an exhortation to the good life, drawing on Matthew 25:41–6;

X.122–99: Christ’s parable of the rich man in Luke 12.16–21 (restructured from pseudo-Augustine);

X.200–45: discussion of earthly transience (drawn from Isidore);

X.246–75: further treatment of salvation, with a reminder of the blessings of heaven.

What cannot easily be conveyed by this summary is the extent to which the homilist interlaces this unusual assortment of sources. Donald G. Scragg, its most recent editor, has noted that the bulk of the homily comprises free vernacular renderings of three distinct Latin source-texts, as follows:

X.58–104: Paulinus of Aquileia, *Liber exhortationis ad Henricum comitem*, cap. 62;¹²

X.125–202: Pseudo-Augustine, *Sermo* 310, *De remedia peccatorum*;¹³

X.203–44: Isidore of Seville, *Synonyma* II. 89–91.¹⁴

Of the three texts represented here, Augustine’s sermon is the most ‘likely’ homiletic source, and its emphasis upon the efficacy of alms-giving as a form of atonement for sin forms an easy synthesis with the penitential ethos of the homily as a whole. The selection of the other two texts, however, requires some explication. Paulinus’s *Liber exhortationis ad Henricum comitem* has been described as a *speculum principis*, or a mirror for princes, in the tradition of Alcuin’s *De uirtutibus et uitiis*.¹⁵ Though the *Liber exhortationis* comprises sixty-six chapters of general admonition, the author of Vercelli X has chosen to focus on a single chapter that deals with the devil’s role as accuser on Judgment Day. This portion, which strangely places in the mouth of the devil a

deferential imputation to Christ to judge rightly and truly, furnishes Vercelli X with some of its most vivid eschatological and legal language.

The debate portions of this section in the *Liber exhortationis* anticipate, to some degree, the homilist's interest in Isidore's *Synonyma*, which is itself framed as a protracted dialogue between the figures *ratio* and *homo*. However, since the passages adapted in Vercelli X do not appear in the same dialogue format, it may be supposed that the text held quite different appeal for the vernacular author.¹⁶ As the full title suggests, the *Synonyma de lamentatione animae peccatricis* provides a handbook of synonymous phrases and expressions on a variety of stock themes and topics concerning the lamentation of the sinful soul. Though it may be supposed from the evidence of Old English glosses contained in three of the eight surviving Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of the *Synonyma* that its primary importance was as a school text for teaching lexis (through the use of synonyms) and grammar (through the use of appositive phrasing),¹⁷ there was clearly much to recommend it beyond its capacity as a 'primer' as a work of sophisticated philosophy.¹⁸ Evidently, our homilist was drawn to those portions of the text containing the well-known *ubi sunt* motif (traditionally asking 'where are' the delights of the world), which he adapts together with a sumptuous catalogue of riches and luxuries.¹⁹ Though the repetitiveness of the *Synonyma* may at first seem to make it an odd text to use, for the author of Vercelli X this very feature seems to have been its greatest virtue: not only did the work provide its translator with a richly descriptive stock of phrases on the torment and transience of earthly life, but it also clearly provided a paradigm for further rhetorical embellishment.

However, as the brief outline above indicates, the 275-line homily is not simply cobbled together from Old English versions (whether pre-existing or not) of these sources. The homilist also shows considerable mastery, both at improvisation and in employing what is sometimes referred to as the 'cut-and-paste' style of cobbling together disparate sources so that key themes and ideas recur throughout, linking different sections identified by Scragg. In the analysis that follows, I shall consider in turn the ways in which the author of Vercelli X adopted and adapted

material from Paulinus and pseudo-Augustine on the one hand, and from Isidore on the other. Although both parts of the analysis will consider changes of structure and detail made by the homilist to his Latin sources, the section on Isidore will develop the ideas of the first section in relation to a wider range of rhetorical techniques found in the homily as a whole. The respective changes made by the homilist to each of his individual sources together suggest considerable confidence both in his command of the source material and in his own vernacular prose style; the author of Vercelli X emerges as a talented writer of Old English prose working under the twin influences of the imported Latin and inherited vernacular rhetorical traditions.

In the two Doomsday sections of Vercelli X derived from Paulinus and Pseudo-Augustine, the vernacular homilist adds significantly to the dramatic context and to the use of direct speech in his sources. Beginning with the section drawn from the *Liber exhortationis*, we have already seen that this section comprises the devil's challenge to Christ (or perhaps to God, as the terms *hælend* ['saviour'] and *dryhten* ['lord'] are used interchangeably throughout this section) to judge fairly and justly on Doomsday.²⁰ The author of Vercelli X, however, adds a response of Christ to Satan, which is not found in the source (X.104–110). This rejoinder appears as an expansion of just two Latin verses derived ultimately from Matthew 25:41 ('Discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem aeternum' ['Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire']) and 25:46 ('Et ibunt hi in supplicium aeternum' ['And these shall go into everlasting punishment']).

These lines, as they are adapted in Vercelli X (as well as in the versions contained in CCC 302 and 421), are of particular interest because they include what appear to be (albeit metrically imperfect) embedded lines of poetry, as indicated by my lineation below, with significant alliteration highlighted in bold type (Vercelli X.101–10):²¹

Hwæt, we nu gehyrdon secgan, men ða leofestan, hu bealdlice spreceð þæt
dioful to þam hælende, **⁊** þa misdæda stæleð on þa gæstas. He þonne ofer
eaxe besyhð, se soðfæsta dema **⁊** se rihtwisa, to ðam [forworhtum **⁊** to
ðam] scyldegum **⁊** þus cwið worda grimmost: 'Nelle ic eow habban on
minre geferrædenne,

ac ge fram me gew itað, w uldres bedælede,
 f reondum af yrde, f eondum betæhte,
 [in þam] h atan wylme h elle fyres,
 þær ge awirgedan sculon s incan ȝ s wincan
 in ðam h atan h ellebrogan
 ȝ in þam w itum w unigan a butan ende.’

Þæne bið dryhtnes word hraþe gehyred þam synfullan strengest; bið se dema þearl.

[Indeed, we have now heard say, dearest men, how boldly the devil will speak to the Savior, and impute those misdeeds to those souls. He then, the true and righteous Judge, will look over his shoulder to the (damned and to the) guilty ones, and thus say the grimmest of words: ‘I wish not to have you in my company, but you will depart from me, deprived of glory, withdrawn from friends, delivered to fiends in the hot surge of hell-fire where you, condemned, must sink and toil (in the) hot hell-terror and dwell in those torments forever without end.’ Then is the Lord’s word immediately heard by the sinful to be most powerful: the Judge is harsh.]

This ‘poetically inspired’ passage presents a familiar contrast between society and exile, and the reconstructed lines contain numerous verbal and thematic correspondences with such poems as *The Wanderer* (lines 20–1), *The Seafarer* (line 16), *Solomon and Saturn II* (lines 377–84), *Exhortation to Christian Living* (line 27), *Christ III* (lines 1519–23), *Christ and Satan* (lines 626–7), and *Guthlac A* (lines 623–7).²² The link with so many vernacular analogues, only some of which bear connections to Latin sources, would seem to betray the influence of known poetic parallels. The case is not diminished by the passage’s seeming ‘prosaic’ interference, which can be located, for example, in the tripartite repetition of *in þam* (including the emendation passage) in no fewer than three of the would-be ‘a-lines.’

Though the passage is substantially different in rhythm and structure from the rest of the homily, there is nevertheless an abundance of thematic, verbal, and aural echoes that link it to the rest of the piece. To begin with, the themes of deprivation and exile connect this section (as we shall see) to the subsequent *ubi sunt* catalogue (Vercelli X.231–45), and also to Christ’s second speech to the damned (X.141–89). However, a close look at one particularly troublesome line of the embedded poem reveals that

the homilist has attempted to assimilate this obviously ‘purple’ passage into the larger fabric of the homily. It has been argued that the substitution of the alliterative and rhyming doublet *sincan* ȝ *swincan* in line 107 for the half-line *wite adreogan* (‘to suffer torments’), which occurs in the only other complete versions of the homily (in CCCC 302 and 421), disrupts the structural alliteration of the passage and reveals the relative incompetence of the Vercelli X homilist.²³ This view, however, does not take into account the possibility of ‘ornamental alliteration,’ which, it has been argued, may include the non-traditional alliteration of ‘s’ and ‘s-groups,’²⁴ just as it does not recognize the substitution of a rhyming pair for an alliterative half-line as an attested surrogate for an alliterating line.²⁵ However in the case of Vercelli X, this substitution may also have been introduced precisely to facilitate aural links between related passages. Though as an alliterative pair *sincan* ȝ *swincan* is unique to this homily (and to the wider extant corpus), the element -*swinc*- recurs in a subsequent speech by Christ, Vercelli X.166–7, under comparable circumstances. There Christ addresses the sinners, saying: ‘Eall ic nu afyrre minne fultum fram ðe. Hafa æt þinum gewinne þæt ðu mæge ȝ on þinum geswince’ (‘I now withdraw all my help from you. Have from your labour that which you can, and from your toil’). This time, however, there is a Latin antecedent for the Old English: ‘ecce aufero auxilium meum, habeto laborem tuum.’²⁶ Here the word *geswinc*, which appears in all extant variant texts, faithfully translates the Latin *laborem*. The repetition of the element -*swinc* - in Vercelli X alone creates a verbal echo and structural link lacking in its counterparts. As a unit, then, the passage serves a larger structural purpose in that the expulsion of the damned from Christ’s *geferræden* (‘company’; Vercelli X.105), as it is described in the ‘poetically inspired’ passages above, contrasts the homily’s farewell vision of the blessed who are welcomed into Christ’s *geferræden* in heaven (in X.263–75). This type of antithesis provides a useful means of contrast that links these disparate sections of the homily.

There is a similar attempt to assimilate the material contained in the ten lines following this ‘poetic’ matter (Vercelli X.111–21), also adapted from Paulinus. One passage in particular merits discussion (X.114–19; emphasis mine):

We wæron oft gemyndgode to ures dryhtnes gehyrsumnesse, þæt we scoldon his willan wyrcan 7 his bebodu healdan 7 rummode bion rihtra gestreona 7 bearfendum arfulle 7 wydewena helpend 7 **steopcilda frefrend** 7 earmra retend 7 wependra frefrend, 7 gif we ðas weorc ongyннаð 7 gelæstað, þonne bioð we Godes dyrlingas in hiofenum.

[We were often exhorted to the obedience of our Lord, that we should work his will, and hold his commandments, and be generous of proper treasures, and be respectful to the poor, and a helper of widows, and **a comforter of orphans**, and a consoler of the wretched, and a comforter of those weeping, and if we begin these works and persevere, then we shall be God's darlings in heaven.]

The passage echoes an earlier statement in the homily (Vercelli X.35–7), in which the whole of the human race is referred to as God's *steopcild* in need of his mercy: 'Ær þan we wæron steopcild gewordene, ða we wæron bewerede þæs hiofoncundan rices, 7 we wæron adilgode of þam þryðfullan frumgewrite ða we wæron to hiofonum awritene' ('before we were made orphans, when we were forbidden from that heavenly realm, and we were blotted out of that glorious document; then we were written down for the heavens'). The transference of the role of caretaker from Christ to the Christian audience demonstrates in a tangible way the principle of *imitatio Christi*. The passage likewise contains a considerable number of verbal resonances with other sections of the homily. The agentive suffix *-end*, which appears no fewer than four times in the above passage, occurs in a string of epithets for God and Christ two further times in the homily, at Vercelli X.19–20 and again at X.92. Though this type of sequence is rather common in both poetry and prose, especially given the accretive nature of Old English praise, it is relatively rare to find such a diversity of titles contained in a single work.²⁷ A few appear to have been invented for the sake of the homily. For example, the epithet *retend* is unattested elsewhere except in a single variant text. The title *steorend* ('steersman' or 'director'), which occurs at Vercelli X.92, is also rare in its application to Christ. Some of the most notable examples occur unsurprisingly in *Andreas* (lines 121a and 1336a), also contained in the Vercelli Book, where Christ is literally figured as a steersman on a ship. The repetition of these highly formalized epithets both at the beginning of the homily and during the trial of the damned helps to join and to reinforce through aural replication two distinctively rhetorical

portions of the homily.

In addition to filling out the Paulinus material, the homilist of Vercelli X makes significant emendations to the existing passages drawn from this source. One noteworthy change is that the homilist restructures the devil's address to Satan. As Scragg points out, the homilist correctly translates the Latin *aequissime iudex* ('most fair judge'), which occurs twice in Paulinus, but he changes the sequence in order to introduce and conclude the section of the devil's speech that falls at lines 67–75.²⁸ What Scragg does not mention, however, is the fact that the homilist supplies a third address, parallel in form to the first two, that provides a frame for the whole of the devil's speech (Vercelli X.67–100). This third speech echoes (with expansion) the pattern set up in the first two utterances (Vercelli X.67 and 76), which employ the injunction *dem la*, together with one or more epithets for Christ, and an object indicating Christ's *rihtne dom* (X.92). This use of what in verse is termed 'incremental repetition,' or the repetition of a single phrase in successive phrases or paragraphs, isolates this group of passages from the rest of the homily, and gives it a distinctive character and rhythm. The lyrical quality of this repetition culminates as Satan confesses that he has lured men to sin by the stirring of his harp (Vercelli X.83–7):

Ac ðonne ic mine hearpan genam 7 mine strengas styrian ongan, hie ðæt
lustlice gehyrdon, 7 fram þe cyrdon 7 to me urnon. 7 ic hie mine leahtras
lærde, 7 hie me hyrdon georne. 7 ic hie to þeofðum tyhte 7 to geflīte
scyrpte 7 to inwitfullum geðancum, þæt ic wolde þæt hy [þe] afrem[d]edon.

[‘But when I took up my harp and began to stir up my strings, they heard that willingly and turned away from you and ran to me; and I taught them my vices, and they listened to me eagerly, and I impelled them to thefts and aroused them to strife and to deceiving thoughts because I wished them to be alienated from you.’]

Satan's musical performance establishes him as a poetry-maker alongside Christ (though with the important distinction that his verses do not appear in the homily itself).²⁹ The devil is perhaps elevated in this manner because he is unusually depicted in the homily both as Christ's adversary and as Christ's advocate, in that he helps Christ to challenge the guilty.³⁰ In this passage in particular, Satan's seductive rhetoric is foregrounded through a

variety of so-called poetic devices. The first of these is paronomasia. Satan puns on the word *scyrpton*, which here means ‘aroused,’ but which in Vercelli X.79 means ‘adorned’: ‘Hie hie scyrpton minum reafum, nals ðam gewædum þe ðu hie hete’ (‘they adorned themselves in my garments, not at all in those clothes which you commanded them’). The pun on these two meanings reveals that by arousing sinners, Satan is able to veil them from God. This kind of witticism may be an attempt to link subsequent passages in the homily that mention the elaborate clothes and ornaments of sinners.³¹

Satan also uses rhyme and near-rhyme between elements ending in *-yrdon* and those that contain *-yr* - or *-ur* - sounds, giving the passage a lyrical quality that fittingly seduces the ear. One of the words highlighted by this sound-play is the word *cyrdon* (‘they turned’), which recurs at key moments in the homily. At Vercelli X.98 it again shows the turning of the sinful towards Satan, but at X.250 it implies the reverse movement of the sinners who return to God, and at X.263 the same verb expresses a final exhortation to turn towards the good path.

Another word that is highlighted by this sound-play is the verb (*ge*)*hyrdon*, which, together with its derivatives *hyrness* (‘obedience’), and *mishyrness* (‘disobedience’) is repeated more than any other significant word in the homily.³² Obedience, hearing, and speaking are emphasized in the opening lines of the homily (X.1–8; emphasis mine):

Her sagað on þyssum halegum bocum be ælmihtiges dryhtnes godspelle, þe he him sylfum þurh his ða halegan mihte geworhte mannum to bysene ȝ to lare. ȝ he sylf gecwæð his halegan muðe: ‘þeah man anum men godspel secge, þonne bio ic þæronmiddan.’ ȝ þam bioð synna forgifene þe ðæt godspel segð ȝ gecwið, ȝ synna þam bioð forgifene þe hit for Godes naman *lustlice gehyreð*, ȝ þam bið wa æfre geworht þe secgan can ȝ nele, for ðam men sculon þurh ða godcundan lare becuman to life.

[Here it says in these holy books about the almighty Lord’s gospel, which He Himself through his holy power created for humanity as an example and as a lesson. And he himself said with his holy mouth: ‘even if (one) man tells the gospel to one person, then I will be there in the midst.’ And to him sins will be forgiven who says the gospel and tells it, and sins will be forgiven to him who *willingly hears* it on account of God’s name; and to him woe will be made forever who can speak and wishes not to, for men must through that divine teaching come to life.]

Although Scragg has judged Vercelli X.1–8 a late addition, one might argue that these lines are well integrated into the whole. This becomes clear once we recognize that the emphasis throughout is not so much on reading and listening, as Scragg maintains, but rather on speaking (mentioned four times) and hearing (mentioned twice) the gospel and holy books. The repetition of the word *sylf* (Vercelli X.2 and 3), which emphasizes Christ's *own* teaching, and the physical detail of Christ's *halegan muðe* (X.3) serve to emphasize this point. There are a number of transparent verbal parallels with the devil's speech. The first of these echoes links the opening description of the sinner who *lustlice gehyreð* ('willingly hears'; Vercelli X.6) God's name to the description of the sinners in Satan's address who *lustlice gehyrdon* ('willingly heard'; X.84) Satan's music and oratory. Both passages likewise rebuke acts of negligence. In the devil's speech (Vercelli X.81–3) the admonition is as follows: 'þonn[e] hie gehyrdon þine bec rædan ⁊ þin godspel secgan ⁊ hira lif rihtan ⁊ him ecne weg cyðan, hy symle hiera earan dyttan ⁊ hit gehyran noldon' ('when they heard your books read and your gospel spoken, and their life made right, and the eternal way made known to them, they always closed their ears and wished not to hear it'). This passage corresponds to the above excerpt in which those who *secgan can ⁊ nele* ('can speak, and wish not to'; Vercelli X.7) are reproached. The emphasis placed on speaking and hearing in lines 1–8, therefore, is reflected in the significant changes made to the materials derived from Paulinus and pseudo-Augustine, especially in the two gospel passages adapted from Matthew and Luke in Christ's poetic speech (Vercelli X.101–10) and his parable of the sinners (derived from Luke 12:16–21, here used as a framing device throughout the passage derived from pseudo-Augustine at X.122–99).³³

The introductory passage at lines 1–8 also provides numerous verbal parallels with the remainder of the homily. The repetition of the adjective *halig* three times in the first three lines forms a tripartite structure that recurs at critical moments.³⁴ The most prominent of these triads is the stock-description of the three hosts (namely Christ, the devil, and the damned) at Judgment (Vercelli X.55–66).³⁵ There are also deliberate parallels with the closing lines of the homily. In these final lines there is a (by now) recognizable emphasis on speaking and hearing (X.270–5;

emphasis mine):

þær is sang 7 swinsung 7 Godes lof **gehyred**, 7 þæs hyhstan cyninges
gehyrnes, 7 sio biorhtu þara **haligra** sawla 7 þara soðfæstra scinaþ swa
sunne, 7 þa men rixiað swa englas on heofenum. 7 we syndon þyder
gelaðode 7 gehatene to þan **halegan** [ham] 7 to þam cynelycan friðstole þær
drihten Crist wunaþ 7 rixað mid eallum **halegum** a butan ende, amen.

[There is song and melody and the praise of God **heard**, and the **obedience**
of the highest King; and the brightness of the **holy** souls and of the righteous
shines as the sun, and men reign as angels in the heavens. And we are
invited thither and called to the **holy** [home] and to that kingly refuge,
where the Lord Christ dwells and reigns with all the **saints** forever without
end. Amen.]

As in the opening lines of the homily, the element (*ge*)*hyr*- is here repeated twice. There is also an emphasis on song, which looks back to the singing of the *sealm scopas* in Vercelli X.12, and which contrasts with the seductive song of the devil in the passage previously discussed. The three-fold repetition of the word ‘holy’ both as an adjective and as a substantive also invites comparison with the opening lines, where the same pattern is applied. These verbal parallels form a kind of ‘envelope pattern’ (a phrase at the beginning of a self-contained rhetorical unit that repeats at the end), which brackets the whole of the homily and gives it coherence. If Vercelli X.1–8 are in fact a late addition, they are seamlessly incorporated into the structure of the homily.

Turning from those passages derived from Paulinus to those borrowed from the pseudo-Augustinian *De remedia peccatorum*, we find a similar technique of variation and expansion. Parallel to the previous dialogue between Christ and Satan, the homilist again employs incremental repetition to frame God’s speech to the rich man (Vercelli X.141–89). The phrase *to hwan* (‘wherefore’), which conveys God’s indignation at the sinfulness of the rich man, occurs four times in the first twenty-two lines of the speech (X.149, 160, [161], and 162), alternating with *for hwan* (X.144 and [157]) to provide the main structure of the address. Placed at the beginning and end of the speech, the phrase effectively book-ends the whole of the address. These interrogative statements imitate loosely the Latin construction *quid* + a second-person singular pronoun, though the Latin version, significantly, does not present a comparable envelope

pattern.

The middle sections of the passage likewise rely upon various forms of verbal and structural repetition. At one point the homilist considerably alters the structure of the Latin, fabricating a *tricolon abundans*, or a series of three clauses in which the third clause is the longest, through the repetition of the phrase *mine þearfan* (177–81; emphasis mine):

‘Mine þearfan lifiað bi me[, g]if ðu mæge,³⁶ wuna butan me. *Mine þearfan* me ealne weg habbað, ⁊ ic hie næfre ne forlæte. *Mine þearfan* me lufiað, ⁊ hie cygeað me hyra dryhten – ⁊ hine gelomlice nemnaþ ⁊ lufiað, ⁊ him ege to habbað, swa men sculon to hiera hlaforde.’

[*‘My poor* (will) live by me; if you can, dwell without me. *My poor* have me always, and I will never abandon them. *My poor* love me, and they call me their Lord’ – and name him frequently, and love him, and hold him in awe, as men must to their Lord.]

A comparison with the Latin reveals just how extensively the rhetoric is embellished in the Old English: ‘Pauperes mei uiuunt sine te. Tu, si potes, dura sine me. Pauperes mei habentes me omnia habent. Tu quid habes si me non habes?’ (‘My poor live without you. You, if you can, live without me. My poor, having me, have everything. What do you have if you do not have me?’).³⁷ Though the homilist is overall more faithful to this homiletic source, other embellishments in Vercelli X.164–72 include the use of rhyme (*groweð ⁊ bloweð*), paronomasia (*renas* and *onhrinað*), and repetition (*forbringeð* and *bringeð*). The additional repetition of the verb *afyrre* four times in the course of the speech derived from the pseudo-Augustine sermon (Vercelli X.143, 152, 166, and 168) helps to connect the passage back to the embedded lines of poetry, in which the same verb participates in an exile-topos. Once again, the homilist’s use of envelope-patterning to frame speeches taken from distinct sources promotes unity in the structure of the homily at large.

As we have seen in the several passages examined thus far, the homilist uses a variety of rhetorical strategies to highlight important passages, the most prominent of which are the use of poetically inspired lines and the (often presumed to be poetic) devices of incremental repetition and envelope-patterning. Other forms of repetition, at various levels of diction, are also found

throughout the piece. For example, the homilist elsewhere employs the type of repetition known as *anaphora*, or the sequential repetition of a single word at the beginning of new clauses, a device commonly found in catalogues in both prose and poetry. One of these catalogues, in Vercelli X.250–4, employs the familiar construction *mid ... mid* + a series of datives:

ᚮ þa þe to me cyrrað fram hyra gyltum, ᚮ geandettaþ on minum naman, ᚮ
bote mid fæstenum doð ᚮ mid tearum ᚮ mid gebedum, þonne ic him forlæte
mine miltse to, ᚮ forgifenyssse sylle, ᚮ min rice alyfe, ᚮ heofonlicne weg
tæce, þær bið a god ᚮ sio hea blis ᚮ sio mycle med.

[And those who turn to me from their sins, and confess in my name, and perform penance with fasts, and with tears, and with prayers, then I will give my mercy to them, and grant forgiveness, and concede my kingdom, and teach them the heavenly way, where there is always goodness, and the high joy, and the great reward.]

These lines, which occur almost at the end of the homily, exhort sinners to undergo penance. This particular type of catalogue occurs some eighty times in the extant corpus in sets of three or more linked *mid*- clauses.³⁸ As we shall see, the construction occurs a second time in the lines translated from Isidore's *Synonyma* (Vercelli X.220–9) in order to describe the riches that belong to the wealthy. As a prescription for repentance, however, the catalogue has a more restricted usage. In this capacity, the *mid*- catalogue occurs some fourteen times in the extant corpus. No fewer than five of these examples occur in the Vercelli Book, in V.113–15, XI.1–4, XII.12–16, XIX.160–4, and XX.1–5.³⁹ Moreover, the last four of these passages recycle many of the same items, but vary considerably in terms of skill and technique. Compare, for example, the nearly identical passages found in Vercelli XII and XIX (emphasis showing points of overlap):⁴⁰

þonne wið þon gesette us sanctus Petrus syðþan ᚮ oðerra cyricena
ealdormen þa halgan **gangdagas þry**, to ðam þæt we sceoldon on Gode
ælmihdigum þiowigan **mid usse gedefelice gange** ᚮ mid sange ᚮ **mid ciricena
socnum** ᚮ **mid fæstenum** ᚮ **mid ælmessylenum** ᚮ mid halegum gebedum.
(XII.12–16)

[Then, because of that, Saint Peter and the elders of the other churches afterwards established for us the **three holy Rogation Days**, in order that we should serve God almighty **with our fitting procession** and with song **and with church-visits and with fasts and with almsgivings** and with holy

prayers.]

Þ hie ða ealle swa dydon Þ gesetton þa him betwīnan þæt man a syððan sceolde þas *þry gangdagas* healdan fullice *mid fæstenum* Þ *mid ælmessylenum* Þ *mid cyricsocnum* Þ *mid eadmodlicum gange* Þ *mid reliquiasocnum*, Þ *mid eallum godum weorcum*. (XIX.160–4)

[And they (the people of Vienne) all did so, and they established among them that one must fully observe always thereafter those **three Rogation days with fasts and with almsgivings, and with church-visits**, and **with humble procession**, and with visits to shrines and with all good works.]

Despite obvious verbal and structural differences, the passage in Vercelli XII achieves more elaborate aural effects. Note, for example, the triple ‘s’-alliteration in the first line of the passage, as well as the rhyme between *gange* and *sange*. *Sange* also alliterates with *socnum*, an effect that is highlighted by the fact that *cyric* and *socnum* are construed as two words in Vercelli XII, while they are compounded in Vercelli XIX. These comparisons reveal obvious gradations in terms of both style and rhetoric, even among works anthologized in the same collection.

Though it is clear, as in the case of Vercelli XIX, that the *mid*-construction may translate a Latin statement formed by the preposition *cum* + an ablative,⁴¹ the fact that there are no known Latin antecedents for any of the other vernacular passages in the same manuscript, including Vercelli X, suggests that these catalogues were likely favourites in the collection on account of their ability to sustain such aural devices as alliteration, assonance, and homoeoteleuton. Indeed, each of these devices is present in the passage excerpted from Vercelli X.250–4, as can be seen by the recurring ‘y’ sound in the first clause, the occasional sound-play between consonants, and the repeated dative ending *-um*. This impressive assortment of devices again attests to the homilist’s considerable ability and expertise.

Catalogues appearing throughout the homily stand up to similar scrutiny. The following passage employs a tripartite structure (Vercelli X.45–52):⁴²

Ne syn we to gifre, ne to frece ne to fyrenlusteorne, ne to æfestige ne [to] inwitfulle, ne to tælende ne to twyspræce, ne morðor to fremmanne [ne aðas to swerianne ne niðas to hæbbenne] ne leasunga to secganne ne þeofða to beganganne ne wirignessa [to fyligenne] ne heafodlice leahtras; ne lufien

[we] ne scincraeftas, ne herien we ne galdorsangas; ne unriht lyblac ne onginnen we, ne to yðbylge [ne syn we], ne to langsum yrræ næbben we [ne we on oferhydo ne gewitan].⁴³

[Neither should we be too greedy, nor too bold, nor too eager to satisfy lustful desires, nor too envious, nor (too) wicked, nor too slanderous, nor too detracting; nor (should we) commit murder, (or swear oaths), or commit acts of strife or speak lies, or engage in thefts, or commit blasphemies, (or perform) capital sins, nor let (us) love sorceries, or extol incantations, nor let us undertake occult art, (nor let us be) too easily irritated, nor let us have too lasting anger (nor let us assign blame in pride)].

The first seven items employ the construction *ne to* + an adjective. The following six items use the less common construction *ne to* + an inflected infinitive. The final inventory combines *ne* + a subjunctive. The first method is particularly popular in homilies because it provides a lucid, paratactic structure that is easy to supplement. However, by varying the syntax in this manner, the homilist achieves a wider range of sound effects. The occurrence of ‘f’ and ‘t’ alliteration in the first construction, homoeoteleuton in the second, and the repetition of the pronoun *we* in the third together presents a rich sound texture. There is also a gradual lengthening of words contained in each clause. These combined methods present a clear progression towards sins that pertain to deceit and evil art. These transgressions are especially important at this juncture in the homily because the lines immediately preceding and following the catalogue warn the audience to protect themselves against the treacheries of the devil. Even while working within the highly stylized medium of the catalogue, the homilist demonstrates his special ability to customize formulas to suit his primary focus.

There are at least four other occasions in Old English homilies, and at least three in poetry, where this type of catalogue occurs in a string of three or more items.⁴⁴ These vary in style, length, and focus. The *ne to ... ne to* catalogue in Wulfstan’s homily VIIIc, 165–73 provides an especially useful analogue for the passage from Vercelli X because it presents a similar castigation of sinners and deceivers:

And ne gyman ge galdra ne idelra hwata, ne wigelunga ne wiccecræfta; ⁊ ne weorðian ge wyllas ne ænige wudutreowu, forðam æghwylce idele syndon deofles gedwimeru. Ne beon ge ofermode ne to weamode ne to niðfulle ne to

flitgeorne ne to felawyrde ne ealles to hlagole ne eft to asolcene ne to unrote. And ne beon ge to rance ne to gylpgeorne ne færinga to fægene ne eft to ormode, 7 ne beon ge to slapole ne ealles to sleace, ac scyldað eow georne wið deofles dare.⁴⁵

[And do not take notice of either incantations or idle divinations, neither sorcery nor witchcraft, and do not worship fountains nor any forest-trees, because all frivolous things are the illusions of the devil. Nor be proud nor too ill-humored, nor too quarrelsome, nor too contentious, nor too talkative, nor at all too inclined to laugh, nor also too sluggish, nor too dejected. And be you neither too ostentatious, nor too eager of boasts, nor suddenly too joyful, nor also too proud, and neither be you too lethargic, nor at all too slack, but shield you eagerly against the devil's injury.]

Wulfstan builds upon the basic structure *ne ... ge ... ne*, differentiating structurally between actions that pertain to evil arts and states of being marked by intemperance. Though the content of the catalogue is similar to Vercelli X, the style is remarkably different. While the Vercelli homilist varies the syntax to offset offences pertaining to trickery and witchcraft, Wulfstan uses a sequence of 'w' alliteration to achieve the same effect.

Previous studies have likewise demonstrated substantial correspondences between the *ne to ... ne to* catalogues found in Vercelli X and in the poems *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer* (lines 44–7).⁴⁶ The construction used in the segment from *The Wanderer* is particularly apt, as it focuses on mental attributes in a manner comparable to that found in the homilies (lines 62–9):⁴⁷

Swa þes middangeard
ealra dogra gehwam dreoseð ond fealleþ,
forþon ne mæg weorþan wis wer, ær he age
wintra dæl in woruldrice. Wita sceal gepyldig,
ne sceal no to hatheort ne to hrædwyrde,
ne to wac wiga ne to wanhydig,
ne to forht ne to fægen, ne to feohgifre
ne næfre gielpes to georn, ær he geare cunne.

[So this middle earth each and every day declines and decays. Therefore, a man may not become wise, before he possesses a portion of winters in the worldly kingdom. A wise man must be patient; he must not be too hotheaded nor too impulsive of speech, nor too weak a warrior, nor too rash, nor too timid, nor too rejoicing, nor too greedy for riches, and never

too eager of a boast, before he is wholly aware.]

In both analogous sections of *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*, although the immediate contexts are more ‘secularized’ (in the specific virtues expounded here) than in the homiletic passages examined above, it has been argued that the contrasting vision of heaven presented at the end of each poem establishes an overarching ‘Christian’ message.⁴⁸ Given this sustained religious context, the inclusion of what has traditionally been labelled a ‘secular’ poetic motif within Vercelli X is neither jarring nor surprising. As we saw earlier in relation to the embedded lines of poetry at lines 101–18, what have conventionally been labelled ‘secular’ poetic motifs within Vercelli X are seamlessly integrated into the homily.

If the homilist of Vercelli X displays skill at synthesizing poetic material, he is equally adept at harmonizing what appear to be fragments from other homilies. Vercelli X.101–8 presents an example comprising both embedded lines of poetry *and* an embedded homily, since these lines are book-ended by the formulas *men þa leofestan* (‘Dearest men’ or ‘Dearest people’) and *a butan ende* (‘forever without end’), which so commonly begin and end vernacular homilies. In the Vercelli Book alone, these phrases occur as an external framing device in no fewer than eight homilies.⁴⁹ While the phrase *men þa leofestan* also occurs internally in many homilies, Vercelli X stands alone in its double use of the internal ‘false ending,’ *a butan ende*, both in respect to the collection as a whole and in relation to the homilies found in the extant corpus. I have found five prose homilies in the extant corpus in which this construction appears twice (not including the variant text for the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany, from BL, Cotton Faustina A. ix, lines 182 and 204), and (so far as I am aware) in no other homily does it occur three times or more.⁵⁰ The internal use of these structural formulas in the passage from Vercelli X is symptomatic of an attempt to integrate the seemingly foreign ‘poetic’ material into the surrounding texture of the homily. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that in the lines following the ‘poetically inspired’ passage, the variant phrase ‘Habbað we þænne, men þa leofestan, micle nyðþearfe’ (‘we have then, dearest men, great need’) recurs in Vercelli X.112, as if to return to the ‘primary’ text. This framing device is

repeated again within the homily to bracket the material adapted from Isidore's *Synonyma* located at X.203–44. The phrase *a butan ende* separates the Isidore material and the relevant additions made in the last lines of the homily, which, as stated earlier, echo back (in a general way) to the beginning of the homily. Though there is ultimately no way to determine whether these portions of the homily represent embedded fragments from other homilies, this seemingly deliberate device importantly helps to hold together the vast patchwork of rhetorical structures, styles, and genres found in the homily as a whole.

Although, judging from a simple line count of the derivative sections, Isidore's *Synonyma* may seem the least important of the three sources so far identified, it will be clear that in terms of rhetoric and style the passage adapted from Isidore is one of the most interesting and important sections of the homily as a whole. This fact is perhaps less surprising given that, of all these sources, Isidore was the most widely read in Anglo-Saxon England, and the most influential.⁵¹ No fewer than eight manuscripts of all or part of Isidore's *Synonyma* survive from Anglo-Saxon England,⁵² and it seems from the evidence of surviving booklists and citations by Anglo-Saxon authors that the text had considerably greater circulation than what has survived.⁵³ In the case of Vercelli X, the *Synonyma* provides the building blocks for the homily's extensive treatment of the so-called *ubi sunt* topos, which proved to be such a popular and influential theme in Anglo-Saxon England.⁵⁴ As we shall see, however, the influence of the *Synonyma* upon this homily goes beyond this topos. The passages incorporated into Vercelli X from Isidore's *Synonyma*, sections 89–91, are every bit as creative as the lines adapted from the putative poem cited earlier, and in many ways best reflect the 'artfulness' of the homily in terms of both its style and rhetoric. Though the homilist works closely with his source, recognizing and adapting rhetorical cues and grammatical structures found in the Latin, he also makes meaningful additions and emendations.

The precise style and rhetoric of Vercelli X may also be gauged by means of comparison with another Old English translation of the *Synonyma* II.88–96, found in London, BL, Cotton Tiberius A.iii (fols. 102a–3a), to which Paul Szarmach has given the short title *Warna*, according to the first word of the text.⁵⁵ Though the

sections translated in *Warna*, and those in Vercelli X.208–44 (drawn from the *Synonyma* II.89–91) overlap in terms of content, they are clearly independent translations. As in the case of Vercelli X, no precise manuscript of the *Synonyma* has been located as the base text for *Warna*, and Szarmach finds no textual overlap between the Old English in *Warna* and the three glossed texts of the *Synonyma*.⁵⁶ In contrast to the rather free and selective style of the translation of the *Synonyma* in Vercelli X, the aim of the *Warna* homilist appears to have been to imitate as accurately as possible the Latin text, in terms of both its style and content.

The passages directly preceding the *ubi sunt* material in all three texts present a particularly good test case for such a comparison, as these have typically been neglected in those extensive studies made of the *ubi sunt* catalogue proper.⁵⁷ The passage describing the intemperate use of earthly riches in the Latin (*Synonyma* II.90) is as follows:

Quamuis quis in saeculi gloria fulgeat, quamuis purpura auroque
resplendeat, quamuis cultu pretioso redimitus emineat, quamuis sit
multitudine praemunitus, quamuis excubantium armis protectus, quamuis
innumeris obsequentium cuneis constipatus, quamuis agminibus tutus,
semper tamen in poena est, semper in angustia, semper in moerore, semper
in discrimine; in sericis stratis cubat, sed turbidus; in pluma iacet, sed
pallidus; in lectis aureis, sed turbatus.⁵⁸

[Although one might shine in the glory of the world, although one might glitter in crimson and gold, although one might stand out enfolded in precious clothes, although one might be fortified with a multitude, although one might be protected with an army of sentries, although one might be encircled with innumerable troops of followers, although one might be guarded with retinues, nevertheless he is always in torment, always in narrowness, always in sadness, always in crisis; he lies in silken sheets, but is anxious; he lies on down, but is pallid; [he lies] on golden beds, but is perturbed.]

Isidore presents in this tightly knit passage a highly formalized sequence of structures. The structure for the first seven clauses is *quamuis* + the subjunctive of concession. The first three of these statements presents a *tricolon abundans*, with a syllable count of 12 or 13 in the first clause (since *saeculi* may stand for an original *saeculi*), 12 in the second, and 16 in the third. These statements are also marked through the occurrence of a modifying ablative. The

next three statements, which differ in their use of past participles, present a second *tricolon abundans*, this time with a syllable count of 12–12–18. The seventh *quamuis* clause, which contains an irregular seven syllables, presents a transition into the following four clauses, which contain the structure *semper in* + ablative. The presence of the adverb *tamen* in the first of these statements indicates an attempt to answer the previous sequence. The final three clauses, marked by the structure ‘*x sed y,*’ develop these conditions further.

The *Warna* version imitates closely the structure of the Latin, and for the most part presents a literal translation (lines 13–20):⁵⁹

Ðeh þe æni on wurulde wuldre scine, þeh þe he on purpuran ȝ on golde
glitune, ðeh þe he on deorwurðum girlan gefrætowod oferhlife, þeh þe he
beo mid folce utan ymtrymmed, ðeh þe he beo mid waciendra meniu
gescild, þeh þe he beo mid ungerimum gyhyrsumiendra mæniu ymtrymed,
ðeh þe he beo mid weredum orsorgh, þehweðere he æfre on wite wunað ȝ on
nearunisse ȝ æfre on gnornunge ȝ on orleahstre. On gode webbenum
beddum he hlinað, ac þehweðere oft gedrefe[d], on plumfeðerum he lið, ac
þehweðere oft æblæce; on gyldenum beddum he rest, ac oft rædlice
gedrefed.

[Although one might shine in the glory of the world, although one might glitter in crimson and gold, although one might tower above, enfolded in precious clothes, although one might be fortified around with a multitude, although one might be protected with an army of sentries, although one might be fortified with innumerable troops of followers, although one might be safe with retinues, nevertheless he is always in torment, always in narrowness, always in sadness, always in crisis. He lies in finely covered beds, but nevertheless he is often anxious; he lies on downy feathers, but nevertheless is often pallid; he rests on golden beds, but is often quickly perturbed.]

Minor discrepancies can be seen in the reduplication of words in the Old English where there are synonyms in the Latin source, and in the adjustment of syntax, as in the substitution of *þehweðere* (‘although’) and *and* (‘and’) for *semper* (‘always’) in the last lines of the passage. The double occurrence of the past participle *gedrefed* (though the first instance has been emended by its various editors from the MS *gedrefeð* [‘disturbs’]) likewise preserves the paronomasia intended by the Latin *turbidus* ... *turbatus*.⁶⁰ And while the homilist reads the Latin *tutus* as an

adjective ('safe') rather than as a past participle ('guarded'), represented by *orsorh* ('safe') in the Old English, he translates the sense accurately. None of these modifications, however, significantly changes either the content or style of the passage.

By contrast, however, Vercelli X presents a much freer adaptation. The most striking difference can be seen in the homilist's invention of complex patterns of sound-play and alliteration. For example, the homilist expertly combines the element *-stan(-)* (*-stæn* [-]), in both its long- and short-vowel forms, both stressed and unstressed, to create various levels of paronomasia in the form of compounds, past participles, and superlative constructions. These elements are set in boldface in the passages below (Vercelli X.220–31):

Deah we þysse worulde glenga tiligen swiðe 7 we in wuldre scinan swiðe, 7
 þeah we us scyrcen mid þam readdestan godewebbe 7 gefrætewigen mid
 ðam biorhtestan golde, 7 mid þam diorwyrðan gimstanum utan ymbhon,
 hwæðere he sceal in nearonesse ende gebidan. 7 þeah þa strengestan 7 þa
 ricestan hatan him reste gewyrcean of marmanstan e 7 of oðrum gold-
 frætewum, 7 mid gimcynnum eal astæn e[d] 7 [mid seolfrenum ruwum 7
 beddum] eal oferwreon, 7 mid dieorwyrðum wirtgemengnessum eall
 geseted 7 mid goldleafum gepread ymbutan, hwæðere se bitera deap þæt
 todæleð eall. þonne bið sio gleng agoten, 7 se prym tobroden, 7 þa gimmas
 toglidene, 7 þæt gold toscæned, 7 þa lichaman gebrosnode 7 to duste
 gewordene.⁶¹

[Although we strive greatly for this world's splendour, and we shine greatly in glory, and although we clothe ourselves with the reddest fine cloth, and adorn (ourselves) with the brightest gold, and decorate (ourselves) with precious gemstones; nevertheless, he must await the end in distress. And although the strongest and most powerful order to be built for themselves beds of marble and of other gold embellishments, and all studded with precious gems, and (with silver tapestries and bedding) all covered over, and set with precious spices, and threaded about with gold-leaf; nevertheless bitter death will separate all that. Then will honour be reduced, and glory scattered, and those gems made to vanish, and that gold broken into pieces, and the body corrupted and transformed to dust.]

This proliferation of *-stan(-)* (*-stæn* [-]) elements, together with compounds for *gold(-)* and *gim(-)*, matches the content of the passage, which is itself concerned with the overindulgence of temporal goods. A few of these 'jewel' words are extremely rare, such as *goldleafum*, which occurs nowhere else in the extant corpus outside of variant texts for Vercelli X.⁶² Likewise, the verb

astænan occurs only eight times in the extant corpus, including the verse and prose *Solomon and Saturn* (lines 63 and 68 respectively) and the Paris Psalter version of Psalm 20.3.⁶³ Some appear in the context of other Vercelli homilies: for example, the elements *gold*, *seolfer*, and *godweb* appear in Vercelli II.4, which admonishes that in the great fire on Doomsday those sinners will be burnt who ‘nu her syndon on myclum gylpe 7 on unnyttre gesyhðe goldes 7 seolfres 7 godwebbes 7 woggestreona’ (‘now are here in great boasting, and in the useless sight of gold and silver and fine cloth, and false treasures’).

Though the relevant sections of the *Synonyma* contain comparable instances of wordplay throughout, such puns tend to take place at the level of morphology rather than at the level of semantics. For example, Isidore repeats the element *peric(u)l* - six times throughout these sections, as *pericula* (book II.89.4, 89.5, 90.2), *periclitatur* (89.4), *periculum* (91.4), *periclitaverunt* (91.5). The repetition of the same element across all three sections helps to create unity and coherence. Isidore likewise repeats the element *pot* -, as in *potentes* (II.89.1, 91.3), *potenter* (89.1), *potestas* (89.4), *potentem* (90.1), and *potentia* (91.2), with potential sound-play on the element *pat* - found in *patientur* (89.1) and *patitur* (89.4). As we have seen, the expansion and contraction of adjectives to appear as positives, comparatives, and superlatives presents a variation of the same technique. While such wordplay is inventive, particularly in a piece dedicated to the provision of synonyms, it still cannot match the range of applications found in the passage from Vercelli X.

In addition to embellishing considerably the sound-play in the passage, the Vercelli X homilist makes changes to the structure of the Latin. As in *Warna*, the Vercelli passage maintains the subjunctive mood expressed by *quamuis* + the subjunctive of concession throughout much of the passage, though the definition of what it means to shine in glory is expanded. In addition to combining statements about the costly clothes worn by earth-dwellers, the Vercelli X homilist adds the description of the precious gems, fleshing out the two-part Latin statement into three parts.⁶⁴ The reprimand about ostentatious clothing finds a parallel in the aforementioned speech of the devil, when he claims as his own possession the sinful who dressed in his

garments (Vercelli X.79–81), and throughout God’s speech to the rich man, particularly in his chastisement of the rich man’s miserliness (X.176–99). The passage’s unique interlace of jewel-words through the use of alliteration and paronomasia likewise presents a strong case for originality with regard to these devices.

If the homilist of Vercelli X makes additions to the passage the better to suit his focus, he also omits items that detract from his central point. For example, the author expunges the four statements beginning with *quamuis* that introduce military themes. These seem to have no particular relevance to the topics raised in this section of the homily. At the same time, the homilist recognizes and incorporates examples of wordplay found in the Latin. The Latin *lectus* may be translated variously as ‘bed, bier, couch, marriage bed.’ In an apparent attempt to preserve the Latin paronomasia, the homilist fittingly translates *lectus* as *reste*, which itself may connote both ‘bed’ and ‘grave.’ This word choice seems to have been deliberate, since in all but two of fifteen extant glossed texts in which the word *lectus* appears, the Latin word is glossed as *bed*.⁶⁵ Moreover, the fact that the homilist appends a statement discussing the separation of soul and body and the disintegration of the body into dust reveals not only that he understood the pun, but that he was also able to expand upon it. This somber homiletic ending is absent in both the Latin source and the *Warna* translation.

The Vercelli homilist’s proficiency as a rhetorician may also be seen in the changes he makes to the structure of the Latin. These modifications help to incorporate and organize passages added to the Isidore material. The Isidore section of the homily, already tagged as an embedded homily, may be further broken up into four discrete rhetorical units marked by structural and verbal repetition. The first of these units is bracketed by the phrases *ongitan* ꝛ *oncnawan* (‘perceive and realize’) chiasmatically in Vercelli X.200 and *oncnawan* ꝛ *ongitan* (‘realize and perceive’) in X.209. The phrase at Vercelli X.200 introduces an explanation for the parable of the rich man, expanded from the Latin and quoted from Ws 6:7. The second comes after an interpretation of a gnomic phrase about the dangers that beset the high home (Vercelli X.206–8): ‘Æghwylc heah ham her in worulde bið mid frecennesse ymbseald. Emne swa ða woruldgeþingu bioð maran,

swa bioð þa frecennessa swiðran ’ (‘each high home here in the world is beset with danger. Even as the things of the world are greater, so are the dangers the stronger’). This time neither the bracketed phrase nor the axiom is present in either the Latin or *Warna* versions. Though both texts discuss the fates that befall trees, towers, and mountains, Vercelli X alone telescopes its view to personalize the consequences for hubris.⁶⁶ In addition to embellishing the Latin version, the repetition of these doublets in such close proximity and in the reverse order creates a chiasmus that sections off these lines as a discrete unit. The separation is logical, because it divides the parable from the three exempla that follow. The Latin presents an altogether different structure for this section, which is held together loosely by a series of paired units introduced by *cui ... cui* (represented in the Old English by *þam þe ... þam þe*), *cito ... cito* (not in the Old English), and *quanto ... tanto* (translated as *emne swa ... swa*). Unlike the Old English version, there is no attempt in the Latin to form a transition between the parable and exempla that follow.

The second rhetorical unit, which contains all three exempla, effectively begins at Vercelli X.206 with the interpolated phrase ‘heah ham her in worulde,’ as cited above. The phrase is structurally significant because it foreshadows a subsequent statement about ‘hean myhta her in worulde’ in X.218, both through its use of sustained ‘h’ alliteration and through its parallel syntax. In this instance, the recurring phrase ‘her in worulde’ places special emphasis on the temporal consequences of pride, which are merely enumerated in the Latin. The emphasis on the ‘here’ and ‘now’ provides contrast to the vision of heaven at the end of the homily. By partitioning the exempla through the use of incremental repetition, the homilist creates greater harmony between form and content than is present in either the Latin or the *Warna* version.⁶⁷ Though the Latin gradation presented by the positive adjective *alta* (‘high’) in the first exemplum, and by the superlative *altissimi* (‘highest’) in the third, creates a kind of framing effect, the sentences are otherwise only loosely connected through their repetition of a present indicative verb + an ablative of agent. The expert craft of Vercelli X may once again be seen in contradistinction to three variant versions of the same homily. In these versions the strong aural link between the two framing passages is diminished by the

substitution of the non-alliterating term *ar* ('property' or 'landed property') for the word *ham* in the opening phrase 'heah ham her in worulde.'⁶⁸ In the case of these variant texts, however, such mutation may be explained by dittography, since the word *ar* appears just two lines previously, in Vercelli X.203.

The third unit, which contains the aforementioned castigation of personal wealth (*Synonyma* II.90, and Vercelli X.218–20 in the Old English), develops from the statement 'swa ða hean myhta her in worulde hreosaþ 7 feallað 7 to lore wiorð, þysse worulde welan wierð to nahte, 7 þas eorðlican wuldor wiorð to sorge' ('so the high powers here in the world collapse, and fall, and come to destruction; the wealth of this world comes to naught; and these earthly glories come to sorrow'). The structure noun + *weorþ* - + *to* + dative, which repeats three times in this passage, conflates four parallel clauses in the Latin: 'In potentem cito cadit inuidia, cito patet insidiis gloriosus. Gloria enim inuidiam parit, inuidia uero pericula' ('Envy quickly falls upon the powerful man; the glorious man lies open to ambush. For glory gives rise to envy, but envy to dangers').⁶⁹ The Old English is more uniform in terms of both structure and sound-play. The same formula recurs later in the (aforementioned) phrase (Vercelli X.229–31): 'þonne bið sio gleng agoten, 7 se þrym tobroden, 7 þa gimmas togliðene, 7 þæt gold toscæned, 7 þa lichaman gebrosnode 7 to duste gewordene' ('then honour will be reduced, and glory scattered, and those gems made to vanish, and that gold broken into pieces, and the body corrupted and transformed to dust'). Here, the phrase *to duste gewordene* presents an obvious echo to the three earlier statements that discuss the fate of 'high powers.' This homiletic phrase, absent in both the Latin and *Warna* versions, logically encases the passages describing the transient condition of all earthly riches.

The final unit, which spans the remaining length of the Isidore material, is book-ended by the phrase 'for þan nis naht' at Vercelli X.231 and 246. The first occurrence of the phrase translates the Latin 'breuis est huius mundi felicitas' ('brief is the happiness of this world'; *Synonyma* II.91). The second occurrence, which brackets the *ubi sunt* material adapted from Isidore, is an interpolation. The homilist uses the phrase to introduce words familiar in prayer, thereby exhorting his audience to love God

above all things: 'For þan nis naht ne selre þonne we lufigen urne dryhten mid ealle mode, 7 mid ealle mægene, 7 of eallum urum ingehiedum' ('therefore there is nothing better than that we should love our Lord with all our mind and with all strength, and with all our understanding'; Vercelli X.246). This statement prompts a series of meditations on the transience of earthly wealth and the importance of repentance, as well as a vision of heavenly joys appropriate to the closing of a homily. This final reflection on heaven, which proposes an exchange of earthly goods for heavenly bliss, draws upon formulas found elsewhere in Vercelli Rogationtide homilies.⁷⁰ Poised before the anticipatory homiletic ending, 'a butan ende,' the return to familiar material demonstrates once again the homilist's skill at synthesis and integration.

We can see, then, from the reorganization of the structure of the homily, that the homilist has not misread the Latin, as it may first appear. Rather, his compartmentalization of self-sustaining rhetorical units helps to provide structure and flow to the Isidore material as it is translated in the Old English. Though the passages adapted from the *Synonyma* in many ways represent the rhetorical centrepiece of the homily, in that these sections display the greatest range of rhetorical techniques and flourishes, the homilist treats the materials adapted from Paulinus and his pseudo-Augustinian source with similar dexterity. Though the homily contains a patchwork of materials taken from different Latin and, presumably, Old English sources (as seems to be indicated by the presence of embedded lines of poetry and homilies), the consistency with which these rhetorical devices are applied throughout the homily seems to suggest the work of a single author.

As the foregoing discussion indicates, the homilist's superior rhetorical skill stands out not only in relation to vernacular homilies found in other collections, but also in relation to homilies found within the same manuscript. This is corroborated by manuscript evidence that indicates the uncommonly high occurrence of verbal repetition in the homily. As Scragg notes, although the Vercelli manuscript is obviously a badly rendered copy of a pre-existing text, the heavily repetitive style of the homily itself induces the kind of mechanical errors (such as eye-

skip or homoeoteleuton) that Scragg detects. According to Scragg's critical apparatus, homoeoteleuton occurs in Vercelli X a total of ten times,⁷¹ as compared with only twenty-three examples that occur in all of the other twenty-two homilies combined.⁷² If the deliberate use of verbal and structural repetition may serve as a gauge of artifice and skill in Old English prose texts, then Vercelli X is something of a marvel. From the above discussion, it will be clear that Vercelli X is a far more complex and nuanced text than has been supposed heretofore, and that the repeated diction and parallel syntax, so far from being an indication of roughness of style or an inability to manipulate the sources satisfactorily, in fact demonstrates the opposite: an Anglo-Saxon author skilfully using vernacular rhetoric, best exemplified in the extant verse.

As we shall see in the following chapter, this type of integration of Latin and vernacular influences can be detected in the Vercelli Book at varying degrees. While the general influence of vernacular rhetorical devices on Vercelli X (in addition to its verifiable Latin sources) has been demonstrated above, the following chapter argues the presence of more pervasive and specific connections to vernacular traditions at the level of theme. The main text examined next, Vercelli XXII, presents a description of the wicked soul's flight from the body, a theme that is attested widely in Old English and Latin literature, with several well-noted examples in the Vercelli Book itself. Both Vercelli XXII and X share a common source in Isidore of Seville's *Synonyma* ; but while the author of Vercelli X presents a relatively close translation of portions of this secular treatise on mourning (however much it is embellished and changed), the author of Vercelli XXII explicitly recasts its source so as to accommodate a thoroughly Christian context. In doing so, the homilist integrates a host of verbal and formal analogues drawn from a wide range of Old English and Latin homilies containing the soul's address to the body. This extensive recasting of a Latin text, as we shall see, demonstrates a work of creative skill and synthesis that is in its own way a match to the rhetorical pyrotechnics of Vercelli X.

5 The ‘Body and Soul’ of the Vercelli Book: The Heart of the Corpus

It is perhaps to be expected that in a manuscript containing such a broad spectrum of materials associated with Judgment Day, and with such a marked emphasis on the importance of atonement and reform, themes relating to the soul and body feature prominently. Looking broadly at just those prose texts contained in the Vercelli manuscript, it is possible to locate at least eighteen different passages in eight different Vercelli homilies that address various aspects of the nature and condition of the human body and soul, and the fate of both entities after death.¹ Several of the homilies demonstrate a sustained interest in the innate weaknesses and frailty of the human body: for example, Vercelli VII (lines 60–71 and 94–108) explores both the particular susceptibility of the female body to corrupting luxuries, and also the general proclivity of the human body towards gluttony and excess. A somewhat different approach can be found in Vercelli IX.89–97, where a catalogue listing the progressive signs of aging seems engineered to offer a grim reminder of the transience of life. But while these examples emphasize the responsibility of the body to live temperately, other works accentuate the reigning will of the soul. For example, the same homily (lines 59–65), explains the soul’s culpability for abuses committed on earth, while in X.55–121, the soul’s principal role is through its participation in a terrifying spectacle of the three hosts at Doomsday who vie for its possession. While in Vercelli XXI.61–86 the various strengths of the soul are treated as defences that protect it from being cast into hell, in IV.308–21 virtuous actions and thoughts are said to offer protection against the sinful arrows of the devil. Although it was once supposed that such marked differences with respect to the treatment of body and soul in the Vercelli Book were the product of undiscerning compilation, recent overviews of body-and-soul literature in Old English have instead stressed the general absence within the wider corpus of a governing theology behind these representations. As Thomas N. Hall has put it: “To a great extent, this apparent confusion can be reconciled by the fact that the Anglo-Saxons were heirs to a large number of disparate classical, biblical, patristic and early

medieval teachings concerning Doomsday, the afterlife, and the concept of the soul which are inherently in conflict and which can only be expected to complicate these issues rather than clarify them.’²

Within the Vercelli Book, by far the most animated of these treatments is the soul’s address to the body, a topos that has been well documented with respect to Vercelli IV and the poem *Soul and Body I*, and indeed in relation to numerous examples appearing outside this manuscript in both Old English and Latin.³ Despite the extensive criticism devoted to the examination of this literature, however, at least one homily has largely escaped critical attention. Vercelli XXII, which draws creatively and selectively upon portions of Isidore’s *Synonyma*, also reveals substantial verbal and thematic analogues with Old English texts containing the soul’s address to the body. A study of this homily in relation to the eleven extant vernacular Anglo-Saxon texts containing the soul’s address (in addition to their Latin influences) demonstrates not only the extent of the author’s incorporation of individual themes from this relatively well-defined corpus of materials, but also his familiarity with a broad range of Latin and vernacular sources that treat the theme of body and soul outside of this group. In particular, the presence of apparently unique parallels between Vercelli XXII, Napier XXIX, the so-called Macarius homily (in CCC 201, pp. 222–30), and portions of Vercelli IV will be explored, raising the possibility of a connection between these works. Partial groundwork for these comparisons has recently been laid in two seminal studies by Charles D. Wright, who argues a common source behind the introduction of Vercelli IV and the so-called ‘Macarius’ homily (found in CCC 201, 222–30), and Claudia Di Sciacca, who investigates more widely the connections between Vercelli XXII itself and the wider corpus of Old English ‘soul-and-body’ literature.⁴ While Di Sciacca aptly focuses on those texts specifically containing the *ubi sunt* topos, my own investigation takes a somewhat broader scope in exploring the range and purpose of the soul’s address to the body as it occurs within and beyond the Vercelli collection. As we shall see, the study of Vercelli XXII highlights the creative means by which an Anglo-Saxon author is able to combine his translation of a Latin source with artful invention drawn in part from a host of intermediary

vernacular influences.

The roots of soul-and-body literature, as it survives into the medieval period, arguably extend as far back as the third millennium BC in Mesopotamia, to the most primitive examples of the debate between body and soul.⁵ The earliest known Christian examples are preserved in Egyptian sources,⁶ and from the early Christian era, two visionary accounts have been deemed especially influential: the apocryphal *Visio Pauli* (as it is known in Latin), first composed in Greek no later than the middle of the third century,⁷ and the Egyptian visions associated with the fourth-century desert father, Macarius the Younger.⁸ As set against this larger corpus of soul-and-body literature, a handful of texts has been identified as containing the motif of the soul's address to the body, a theme that ostensibly developed out of those texts focusing on the soul's departure from its body, particularly that found in the long version of the *Visio Pauli*. In its basic form, the address presents either castigation or praise of the body by the soul after death.

Like other 'dramatic monologues' preserved in Old English,⁹ such as Christ's address to the damned on Judgment Day,¹⁰ or the speech delivered by the 'dry bones' to the wealthy man after death,¹¹ the theatrical potential of the soul's address undoubtedly made it a favourite theme among Anglo-Saxon writers of verse and prose. It also apparently held a particular fascination for homilists, who could treat the address as a mini-sermon enumerating either the joys or the punishments of the afterlife, and ostensibly as a tool for prompting its audience to think about penance for abuses committed with respect to both body and soul.¹² In addition to the poems entitled *Soul and Body I* and *Soul and Body II*, located respectively in the Vercelli and Exeter manuscripts, versions of the soul's address appear in some six Old English homilies, preserved in nine manuscripts.¹³ It is perhaps worth noting that just as the two poems *Soul and Body I* and *II* represent quite different versions of what are clearly related texts, so too the various manuscript versions of the six homilies differ significantly: it may be more correct to think of eleven surviving versions of the soul's address (the two poems plus the nine manuscript versions of the prose), rather than seven (counting the two versions of the poems as representing a single text). These

texts display a complex transmission history, comprising at least four different versions of the address, as recorded in table 2. Short titles are included where they commonly appear in criticism, and variant texts are listed where relevant, with the earliest surviving copy listed first (though of course this order may not reflect the order of composition).¹⁴

The textual histories of these prose texts have been well documented,¹⁵ and the four groupings in table 2 delineate some of the major structural and textual discrepancies between individual versions of the address. Especially important in terms of classification is the specific time of the soul's address featured in each grouping.¹⁶ In the homilies belonging to group 2, the meeting between body and soul takes place at death (ultimately following the tradition of the *Visio Pauli*),¹⁷ whereas in two of the

Table 2 Vernacular versions of the soul's address to the body

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- 1 **Augustini Sermo** : Cambridge, University Library, Ii.l.33 (fols. 207r–11r; s. xii²);¹⁸
 - 2a **The 'Macarius' Homily** : CCCC 201 (222–30; s. xi^{3/4});¹⁹
 - 2b **Napier XXIX** : Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 113 (fols. 66–73; s. xi²);²⁰
 - 3a **The 'Junius' Homily** : Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 85/86 (fols. 2v and 12r–17r; s. x¹ or xi^{med.});²¹
 - 3b **Assmann XIV** : CCCC 302 (73–8; s. xi/ xii), and London, BL, Cotton Faustina A.ix (fols. 23v–7v; s. xii¹);²²
 - 4 **Vercelli IV** : Vercelli, Biblioteca Capitolare CXVII (fols. 16v–24v; s. xi²); the homily also survives in CCCC 41 (pp. 254–80; s. xi¹–xi^{med.}); and CCCC 367, Part II, (fol. 25, lines 275–323 only; s. xii).²³
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homilies belonging to group 3 (the 'Junius' homily and Assmann XIV), and Vercelli IV, the address takes place on Judgment Day. In the remaining homilies (the *Augustini Sermo* and the 'Junius' homily), the meeting takes place at some time between death and judgment, though this shared indeterminacy does not in and of itself appear to warrant a wholly separate grouping.²⁴ The table is also useful for highlighting points at which shared themes do not indicate a clear textual connection: for example, while Vercelli IV and the 'Junius' homily both witness the soul's speech at the time of the Last Judgment, they are not otherwise

associated.²⁵ The combined classification of the Texts in groups 2 and 3 emphasizes three generally acknowledged points of relative chronology:

- 1 Assmann XIV presents an abbreviated version of the 'Junius' homily. These texts are sufficiently close to suggest their derivation from a common antecedent;²⁶
- 2 Both Napier XXIX and the 'Macarius' homily preserve the basic narrative of the vision associated with Macarius. Napier XXIX has been shown to depend upon an earlier version of the 'Macarius' homily for its depiction of the departing souls;²⁷
- 3 The introductory passages in Vercelli IV have been recently shown by Charles D. Wright to borrow from, and significantly expand upon, an earlier version of the 'Macarius' homily, with the source for the latter text deriving ultimately from Ephrem's *De paenitentia*.²⁸ The remaining portion of the 'Macarius' homily and Vercelli IV, however, are not linked.²⁹

Despite the obvious utility of such a table, other divisions between texts are less clearly demarcated, and it is difficult to chart all of these disparities. One of the more fluid features among the vernacular homilies that cannot be clearly assigned to any one recension is the time and length allotted to the damned soul as a respite from the torments of hell, which (if granted at all) is set 'at four different times: annually; weekly, on Sundays; weekly, day unspecified; uncertain periods.'³⁰ Among the texts considered here, the topos of the annual respite occurs in the *Sermo Augustini* and the 'Macarius' homily, while that of the uncertain respite occurs in the 'Junius' homily. There is also considerable variation with respect to the number of speeches contained in each text, so that while all the aforementioned texts contain a version of the corrupt soul's address to the body, several also contain the 'good' soul's address (and the order in which these occur is still further in flux).³¹ In addition to the Vercelli poem *Soul and Body I*, homilies containing both forms of the address include the 'Junius' homily, Assmann XIV, and Vercelli IV. As we shall see, there is also some differentiation in the degree to which the soul assigns and shares blame and praise with regard to the body.³² This cross-pollination with regard to theme would seem to indicate that, on occasion, individual authors had access to several versions of the soul's address and were able to combine elements freely.

In an effort to catalogue further some of these thematic distinctions, scholars have searched for potential sources and analogues. In terms of the specific development of those eleven Old English texts containing the soul's address to the body, however, only three Latin texts have so far been shown to bear considerable influence upon the Old English versions of the address, though none of them serves as a direct source. All but one of the extant Latin homilies (in the ninth-century witness to the Pseudo-Isidorian *Sermo* III) survives in a manuscript context that post-dates the Vercelli Book, though the reasons for ruling out their direct influence are textual rather than chronological, since it is finally unknowable whether the other two homilies are earlier than their manuscript contexts.³³ The Latin homilies are classified in [table 3](#), with roman numerals used to suggest connections between these groupings and the Old English texts cited in [table 2](#). Since these texts will only be dealt with tangentially, it

Table 3 Latin versions of the soul's address to the body

I Pseudo-Isidorian *Sermo* III : Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm 17059 (s. ix);³⁴

IIa Pseudo-Augustinian *Sermo ad fratres in eremo* LXIX ;³⁵

IIb 'Le débat de l'âme et du corps' [sometimes referred to as the Nonantola version] : Roma, Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele 2096 (52), (fols. 193r–4v; s. xi).³⁶

will be sufficient to summarize here that while the Pseudo-Isidorian *Sermo* III shares several verbatim parallels with the vernacular *Augustini Sermo*,³⁷ the *Sermo ad fratres in eremo* LXIX and the sermon titled 'Le débat de l'âme et du corps' present the closest identified antecedent texts for the Old English Texts of Group 2.³⁸

Though considerable critical attention has been paid to the eleven Old English texts containing addresses delivered by the soul to the body, there has been little detailed treatment of the theme of the separation of soul and body as it occurs elsewhere in Old English literature. A glaring omission appears in the case of Vercelli XXII, a homily that, as we shall see, contains extensive and varied verbal and structural analogues with a wide range of

Old English and Latin homilies containing the soul's address, and in particular with Napier XXIX, the 'Macarius' homily, and Vercelli IV. These parallels are far more significant than one would suppose from the generally brief notes of scholars and editors writing on the soul-and-body legend in Old English literature, with an important exception being the recent work of Claudia Di Sciacca on this subject.³⁹ However, it is not difficult to determine the reasons for the homily's critical neglect in this regard. As Donald Scragg has noted, Vercelli XXII presents a highly selective adaptation of Isidore's *Synonyma*,⁴⁰ a text that on the surface appears to have little to do with soul-and-body themes at all. Isidore's influence is certainly notable: all but lines 20–5, 37, 47, 67–9, and 175–220 of the homily rely solely on this text, and these few interludes contain homiletic exhortation.⁴¹ However, even in the passages that have been traced directly to Isidore's text, influences vary from verbatim parallels to the looser adaptation of general themes. As such, the homilist's alteration of his Latin source is still more substantial than this raw line count reveals.

The *Synonyma*, in its complete form, is composed essentially of two parts consisting of a sustained lament spoken by Man on the corrupt condition of the world, and a dialogue exchanged between Man and Reason on the same subject.⁴² The Old English version as it exists in Vercelli XXII recasts the dialogue so that it reads as an exchange that takes place after death between a wicked soul and a host of devils (who speak to the soul). In addition, the homilist reformulates Man's appeal to Death in the *Synonyma*, so that in Vercelli XXII the same lament is spoken by the wicked soul. For these two sections in particular (as we shall see), the homilist appears to draw heavily upon extant Old English versions of the soul's address. While importantly Scragg's edition focuses on the homily's penetrating links with the *Synonyma*, the vernacular influence upon Vercelli XXII is nowhere noted in Scragg's edition of the text; on the contrary, Scragg has posited an intermediary Latin author responsible for the many changes, omissions, and adaptations made to the version of the *Synonyma* presented in Vercelli XXII. The evidence is based on a series of Latin misreadings that he claims demonstrate error at an intermediary stage. According to Scragg's theory, the Old English author of Vercelli XXII was little more than a translator, blindly

rendering a Latin text with its unnoticed errors intact.⁴³ However, as Di Sciacca has since argued, and as we shall see from the evidence presented below, the substantial evidence for vernacular influence significantly challenges this reading.

A second reason for the homily's relative critical neglect is that the majority of the piece is written as indirect speech in the voice of Isidore. This unusual format contrasts noticeably with other addresses, which present either eye-witness accounts of the encounter between soul and body as seen through a spiritual journey granted by angels,⁴⁴ or else as direct speech that narrates future events.⁴⁵ As a result, the details in Vercelli XXII concerning the meeting between soul and body and their impending fates are markedly less imaginative and visually arresting than those found in other accounts. The homily contrasts sharply in this respect with the other soul-and-body addresses contained in the Vercelli manuscript, namely the poem *Soul and Body I* and Vercelli IV, where lavish attention is paid to the detail of the physical condition of the soul and body after their separation.⁴⁶ Other details in Vercelli XXII are likewise abbreviated: for example, although the meeting between soul and body clearly takes place after death, and presumably after a preliminary judgment has been made concerning the salvation or damnation of the soul,⁴⁷ specific details about the time of the meeting are omitted. This omission, however, is not anomalous, as can be seen by comparison with the homilies contained in the Old English *Augustini Sermo* and 'Junius' homily, which contain similar temporal indeterminacy. Likewise, although the soul's address is condensed in Vercelli XXII, there is a comparable foreshortening of the addresses in the homilies belonging to group 2, which provide a more panoramic account of the soul's journey and its encounter with tormenting devils.⁴⁸

Despite these apparent idiosyncrasies, an examination of the formal features of the eleven Old English versions of the soul's address demonstrates larger textual, stylistic, and rhetorical features in common with Vercelli XXII. In summarizing the topical features of the soul's address to the body in its variant forms, Antonette diPaolo Healey has demonstrated that at the root of those Old English texts containing the basic vision structure associated with the soul-and-body legend lies 'two

principal parts': the going-out of souls, an important feature in the Long Version of the [*Visio S. Pauli*], and the address of the soul to the body, a natural development of the two death scenes recorded in the [*Visio S. Pauli*].'⁴⁹ As a point of initial comparison, it may be seen that Vercelli XXII has features in common with both of these traditions: the homily contains both a short description of the going-out of the soul from the body, as well as a lengthy address delivered by the wicked soul on the topic of the corruption of the body.

In Vercelli XXII, the subject of the separation of soul and body is first mentioned in the opening statement of the homily (XXII.1–2): 'Her sægð hu sanctus Isodorus spræc be ðære sawle gedale ȝ be þæs lichoman' ('here it states how Saint Isidore spoke about the separation of the soul and body'). A fuller description occurs at XXII.37–46:

Se halga Isodorus cwæð: Eawla þæt sio sawl [hiofeð þonne] hio of ðam lichoman anumen bið. Ealle hie hie swa wundige hyrwað, ȝ swa fule stincende hie hie onscuniað, ȝ swa hreofe hie hie ascufað, ȝ se lichoma lið on eorðan isne genearwod ȝ mid racentu[m] geðryd ȝ mid bendum gebunden ȝ mid fetrum gefæstnod, ȝ pære synfullan sawle ne beoð þa tintrego gelytlode. Ac þa cwelleras unoflinnedlice cwelmað, ȝ hie unaseccgendlice gnornunge hire wite mænað, for þan þe ða deoflu, swa hwæt swa hie magon wælhreowlices hie þencaþ be hire ȝ doð. ȝ þusendfealdum witum hie hie tintregiað ȝ slitað, ȝ se lichoma on eorðan fulnessum tofloweð þe we ær mid wistum feddon.

[The holy Isidore said: Alas, that the soul (will lament when) she is seized from the body. They all ill treat her as wounded, and they shun her as foully stinking, and they drive her out as leprous; and the body lies in the earth confined with iron and repressed with chains, and bound with restraints, and fastened with fetters. And the tortures will not be lessened for the sinful soul. But the killers will kill unceasingly, and (the soul) will lament her torment with unspeakable lamentation, because the devils, in whatsoever manner they are able, will devise a cruel act and do it. And with a thousand-fold tortures they will torture and injure her, and the body, which we earlier fed with feasts, will flow away in foulness in the earth.]

Comparison with the *Synonyma* I.16–17 reveals the extent to which the Old English version is dependent upon the structure and content of the source-text. Though the relevant portions of the Latin text have been generally identified by Scragg, additional lines are quoted where further resonances can be detected (the passages in *bold italics* highlight parallels with Vercelli XXII):⁵⁰

Omnes mendicantem spernunt, esurientem nec micis suis reficiunt, in os sitientis nullus distillat guttam refrigerii, nullus praebebat mihi uel modicum undae rorem, effectus sum enim cunctis abominabilis. *Quicumque me intuentur, omnes ut ulcerosum contemnunt, ut fetentem exspuunt, ut leprosum tangere horrent. Iacet caro astricta ferro, iacet pressa catenis, iacet ligata uinculis, iacet uincta compedibus, non desunt tormenta, non desunt cruciamenta*, non desunt mihi supplicia, quotidie crudescit in me saeuitia. *Corporis mei carnifices nouis me cruciatibus lacerant, inaudito genere poenarum uiscera mea et membra mea dilaniant, quidquid possunt super me crudele excogitant, non perimor nuda morte, mille poenis extortus, mille subactus tormentis, mille laceratus suppliciis. Caro mea plagis secta computruit*, semiusta latera saniem effundunt, lacerata membra putredine diffuunt, cum fletibus sanguis manat, cum lacrymis cruor stillat; nec est solus fletus lacrymarum, sed uulnerum.

[All spurn the beggar, they do not replenish the hungry with their morsels, no one distills the drop of coolness in the mouth of the thirsty, no one offers to me even a trifling spray of water. Indeed, I am made abominable to all. *All those who see me condemn me as ulcerous, spit me out as stinking, abhor to touch me as leprous. The flesh lies restricted in iron, lies restrained with chains, lies bound in shackles, lies shackled in restraints, torments do not cease, tortures do not leave off*, punishments do not halt for me, daily rage grows fierce in me. *The torturers of my body lacerate me with new instruments of torture, they tear to pieces my organs and limbs with unheard of kinds of punishments, they devise cruelly for me whatsoever they are able, I am not destroyed by simple death, but wrenched with a thousand punishments, ground up with a thousand torments, torn with a thousand tortures. My flesh rots sliced with wounds*, (my) half-burned sides pour out blood, my lacerated members flow with putrefaction, blood streams with weeping, gore drips with tears; nor is it solely the weeping of tears, but (also) of wounds.]

The Old English version presents a relatively close adaptation of the Latin passage, with respect to both its language and structure. Most notably, the vernacular rendering preserves the lengthy string of parallel statements relating to the imprisonment of the body. Since the homilist so frequently omits tautological phrases in his version, the effect here is dramatic, as it uses the device of repetition to present a protracted reminder of the unending tortures to come. Still, the Old English homilist does, on occasion, depart from the Latin. Most notably, the homilist recasts his *dramatis personae*. While Isidore describes the ill treatment of the body on earth by mortals, the vernacular author expands his version to include the rejection of the soul by either mortals or devils (the context is unclear) and the torment of both soul and body after death at the hands of devils.

Thus, while in Isidore's text the body is despised as wounded (or ulcerous), foul-smelling, and leprous, in the Old English version it is the soul that is shunned for these same qualities. Though none of the eleven extant vernacular versions of the address exhibit precisely this type of transference of the sins from the body to the soul, a parallel exists in both the Macarius legend, where the angels who accompany Macarius describe the sins of the wicked soul as foul-smelling, and in the *Visio Pauli*, where the smell applies to the body of the dying man.⁵¹ However, the blame accrued by the soul is not without precedent among the Old English accounts. In the homilies belonging to group 3, the soul is shown to claim partial responsibility for its damnation.⁵² The soul's spiritual corruption in Vercelli XXII likewise arguably functions as an inverse treatment of the elaborate reckoning of the body's decomposition found, for example, in *Soul and Body I* and *II*. In these poems, the focus on the body implies the corruption of the soul, and in fact stands in place of it, since the inevitable hell torments that the soul must undergo are never themselves described.⁵³ The emphasis placed upon the body in the majority of these Old English soul-and-body homilies has been explained by Allen Frantzen as a penitential trope, employed in an effort to discipline the body.⁵⁴ However, the homiletic utility of the focus on the misdeeds of the soul is likewise made clear in XXII.147–56, where the Old English author, adapting Isidore's plea to the soul, turns to a similar exhortation:

Ne syle ðu þine sawle on þines lichaman geweald, ac geclænsa ðu þine mod fram yfelum gepohtum 7 gebrideligað eow fram þæs lichoman scionesse þæt eowre þohtas [syn] clæne 7 hlutre. For ðan we witon þæt be urum gepohtum we sceolon beon demede [fram] Gode, nales þæt an þæt he ure lichoman sceawað ac eac swylce ure gepohtas. God se is dema; be urum gepohtum he mænð ure sawle. For ðan þonne hie us cumað, utan him wiðstandan 7 of ure heortan aweorpan ða yflan gepohtas. For þan ne mæg se lichama nanwiht don butan hit þæt mod wille. Utan clænsian ure geðohtas, þonne ure lichoma ne syngað.

[Do not give your soul over to the control of your body, but cleanse your mind from evil thoughts and bridle yourselves against the desire of the body, so that your thoughts may be clean and bright. For we know that according to our thoughts we must be judged by God; not only does he see our bodies, but also our

thoughts. God, he is our judge; according to our thoughts he judges our soul. Therefore, when they come to us, let us withstand them, and cast out from our hearts those evil thoughts. For the body can do nothing except that which the mind wills. Let us cleanse our thoughts, then our body will not sin.][55

This exhortation is entirely consonant with the message highlighted throughout that the soul bears the majority of responsibility for its wickedness. In this emphasis, it poses a very different outlook from that reported in Vercelli IV, where, as one scholar has put it, ‘if it were not for the damned body’s concupiscent desires, the devil would not be dragging its soul off to hell toward the end of the homily.’56

A second feature that emphasizes the ‘going out of the body’ in Vercelli XXII, as well as its connection to texts containing the soul’s address to the body, is the rejection of the wicked soul by its companion. This theme occurs early on in Vercelli XXII.5–19:

Ne mette ic næfre on minum life swa mycles sares ne yfeles gemæccan swa ic me nu ætforan geseo. For ðan þe swa hwyder swa ic fare, min ungesælignesse me færð mid, ⁊ min yfel ic nahwær befleon ne mæg, þa ic ær ne wolde. Swa hwyder swa ic me hwyrfe, hie me samod siðiað. Eala þæt ic wæs þæs heardestan gepohtes mann ⁊ þæs forcuðestan, þæt ic me mine dagas to nytte ne gedyde þa hwile þe ic on worulde wæs! Ac ða þe ic hira willan worhte, hie willað me nu gesceððan. Hie sendað hira handa on me, þæt hie me mid sare utateon ⁊ to frecnessum utgelæden. Nænig minum yflum me gefultumað, þa ic sylfa ær ne wolde, ac eallum ic eom læded ⁊ ealle hie me mid searwe ⁊ mid inwidde on lociaþ. ‘Wa la,’ cwæð sio synfulle sawl, ‘hwam sceal ic gelyfan æfter me, oððe æt hwam sceal ic getreowða habban, þa ic mine forleas. Nænig min þæra nehstena getreowne geleafan hafað. Eawla, se geleafa is geworden ⁊ he is numen ⁊ he næs naworn gesund.’

[I never encountered in my life a companion of so much sorrow or evil as I now see before me. Therefore, wheresoever I journey, my misery journeys with me, and I can nowhere flee my evil, which I did not want (to flee) before. Wheresoever I turn myself, together they journey with me. Alas, that I was a man of the hardest and most wicked thought, that I did not use my days as an advantage for myself, while I was in the world! But those whose will I worked, they now wish to injure me. They place their hands on me so that they may draw me out with sorrow and lead me out to dangers. No one helps me in my evils, when I’ve not wanted (to help) myself. But I am loathed by all, and they all look on me with treachery and with deceit. ‘Woe then,’ said the sinful soul, ‘in whom shall I believe after me, or in whom shall I have faith when I have lost mine. None of my neighbours has true belief. Alas, the belief has passed and is snatched away, and it was nowhere

whole.']

The soul's lament, while thematically close to the selected Latin passages from which it derives (*Synonyma* I.5–7), differs significantly in substance and context. For example, the Old English is emphatic in its insistence that the burden of sin belongs to the wicked soul alone. By contrast, in the *Synonyma* I.6 we find the very different description of a (purportedly) good man's gradual descent into destruction and peril through the treachery of others, as the soul laments:

Nulli unquam malum feci, nulli calumniatus sum, nulli aduersus exstiti; nulli molestiam intuli, nulli inquietus fui, sine ulla querela apud homines uixi; uitam meam omnes laedere nituntur, omnes contra me frendent atque insaniunt, conserta manu in me pericula ingerunt, ad exitium me pertrahunt, ad periculum me adducunt, ad discrimen uocant meam salutem.

[‘I never did harm to anyone, I was not a problem to anyone, I was not an enemy to anyone; I did not bring harm to anyone, I was not aggressive to anyone, I lived among folk with no complaint; everyone tries to hurt me, everyone rails against me and is crazy, they put in danger with a concerted effort, they drag me to destruction, they bring me to danger, they call for my harm.’]

This shift in the soul's culpability in Vercelli XXII brings it closer to those laments spoken by the damned soul to the body, where those evils performed on earth are highlighted. Furthermore, unlike the external persecution faced by Isidore's speaker (which is only latently internalized by the speaker), in Vercelli XXII the soul's self-created and endless imprisonment is registered internally throughout (much like Milton's Satan who, in *Paradise Lost* book IV.73–5, bemoans his self-made and omnipresent prison: ‘Me miserable! Which way shall I fly / Infinite wrath, and infinite despair? / Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell’).⁵⁷ In Vercelli XXII this introspective angle is brought still further into relief by the homilist's considerable foreshortening of the Latin passages that deal with the corruption of society, leading to the lonely state of the speaker; omitted, therefore, is the text's lengthy criticism of the dishonesty of law and the abuse of power by the rich (*Synonyma* I.8–13).

The self-reflexive depiction of the soul's anguish in Vercelli XXII, however, does not exclude the obvious and aggressive force

of those who seek to harm the soul. While both the Latin and Old English passages contain the description of the tormenters ‘laying hands’ on the speaker (in the Latin *ingerere manu* and in the Old English *sendan handa* ; XXII.12), this ordeal may take on special significance in the context of the vernacular homily, since a similar gesture of ‘laying hands’ on the soul goes back as far as early Coptic texts, where a host of angels, devils, or Death is forced to place hands on, and sometimes within, the body in order to draw out the unwilling soul.⁵⁸ This seemingly distant connection may find further support in the passage quoted previously from Vercelli XXII.39, where we are told that at the moment in which the soul is seized away from the body, the hosts ‘swa hreofe hie hie ascufað’ (‘drive it [the soul] out as leprous’), repeating yet again the specific gesture of casting out the soul, though this time with no reciprocity in the Latin text. It would seem, then, that all throughout Vercelli XXII the homilist is adding layers of known soul-and-body topoi piecemeal to the text as it is adapted from the *Synonyma*.

The above topos of the shunned body and soul likewise finds convincing parallels in a number of compositions containing the soul’s address. One especially illuminating analogue can be found for the treatment of the *gemæcca* (‘companion’) in Vercelli XXII.6 above. While in the *Synonyma* I.5 the speaker’s oppressors are both omnipresent misery and the earthly men who pursue him, in the Old English the ‘companion of so much sorrow or evil’ (‘swa mycles sares ne yfeles gemæccan’) is undis-closed. Either we must assume (following the Latin) that the ‘companion’ is merely the same omnipresent misery or, perhaps (as we may glean from the homily’s context), that the body itself is both the soul’s earthly comrade and the instrument of its wickednesses on earth. However, perhaps a third option is to be understood from a comparison with the Vercelli poem *Soul and Body* I.52–64 (and the variant, *Soul and Body* II.52–64), where we are told about the body’s corrupted relationship to others as a *gemæcca* (‘companion’; emphasis mine):

*Ne eart ðu þon leofra nænig(m) lifigendra
men to gemæccan ne meder ne fæder
ne nænigum gesybban* þonne se swearta hrefen
syððan ic ana of ðe ut siðode

þurh þæs sylfes hand þe ic ær onsended wæs.

Ne mæg þe nu heonon adon hyrsta þa readan

ne gold ne seolfor ne þinra goda nan

ne þinre bryde beag ne þin goldwela

ne nan þara goda þe ðu iu ahtest

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ac her sceolon onbidan ban bereafod

besliten synum and þe þin sawl sceal

minum unwillu(m) oft gesecan

wemman þe mid wordu(m), swa ðu worhtest to me.⁵⁹

[You are not the dearer to any living man as a companion, nor to mother nor to father, nor to any kinsman than the swarthy raven, after I alone journeyed out from you through the very hand of him by whom I had been sent. Nor may you now take from here the red adornments, neither gold, nor silver, nor any of your goods, nor your bride's ring, nor your golden treasure, nor any of those goods which you formerly possessed; but here shall remain the bones bereft, ripped away from sinews, and your soul must often seek you against my will, abuse you with words as you did to me.]

By contrast with Vercelli XXII, the companion in this poem is the body, who is unloved by everyone. And yet, the poem's overall treatment of earthly transience is no less cryptic. It has been proposed that the symbol of the raven functions here (as it does in so much Old English battle poetry) as a herald of violent or ominous events to come.⁶⁰ Indeed, the presence of the ominous bird in this context does seem to bode negatively for the violent estrangement of both the soul from the body and the body from its physical comforts and earthly companions.⁶¹ The passage also resonates with Vercelli XXII.12 (where hands are laid upon the soul), with the distinction that in *Soul and Body I* it is God himself who is cast as the psychopomp, since he is the agent who gives life and takes it away.

The theme of the double separation from body and riches, as expressed in *Soul and Body I* and *II* likewise contains parallels with other Old English texts.⁶² Analogues may be seen, for example, in Blickling X.84–97, where the passing of the flesh and its possessions are linked through an *ubi sunt* topos, a literary convention that (as we saw in chapter 4) is ultimately traceable in both substance and form to Isidore's *Synonyma* (the Latin source for Vercelli XXII).⁶³ Though the Blickling homily does not itself present the full theme of the soul's address to the body, it

nevertheless contains a possible further analogue for Vercelli XXII in its description of the physical abhorrence expressed by the devils for the soul (calling it ‘laþlico ⁊ unfæger’ [‘loathly and ugly’], Blickling X.87).⁶⁴ Here, the Blickling text demonstrates precisely the wider currency with which themes relating to the separation of soul and body were permitted to circulate beyond the ‘core’ group of texts containing the soul’s address.

In addition to the thematic links mentioned so far, a series of more concrete formal and verbal parallels connect the address of the soul in Vercelli XXII to the eleven prose and verse versions mentioned above. In Vercelli XXII.47–52, the soul castigates the body for its sinful behaviour (and in the discussion that follows, continual reference will be made back to this soul’s address):

Eawla, cwæð se halga Ysodorus, þonne gyt geomrað seo sawl þe hire lif ær on receaste lifde, ⁊ cwið: ‘Wa la þæt ic æfre swa ungesæligo geboren sceolde weorðan, ⁊ þæt ic swa earm middangeardes leoht geseon sceolde! Wa la þæt ic swa lange on minum lichaman eardigan sceolde, þa he me reste geearnigan ne wolde! Unlust me wæs to lifianne, ⁊ walic to sweltanne.’

[Alas, said holy Isidore, then still the soul will lament who lived her life earlier in negligence, and say: ‘Woe that I had to be ever so unfortunate as to be born, and that I so wretched had to see the light of the middle-earth! Woe that I had to dwell so long in my body when (the body) wished not to earn rest for me! It was no pleasure for me to live, and (it was) woeful (for me) to die.’]

The lament parallels closely the complaint in the *Visio Pauli*, where the body, seeing its own wickedness, remarks, ‘O that I had not been born, nor brought forth in the world.’⁶⁵ The circumstances of the speech are obscured by the fact that although the homilist identifies the speaker as the wicked soul, the target audience within the narrative is never stated. One possibility is to assume that the soul is speaking to Death (personified), as is the case in the passage directly following this one.⁶⁶ However, the likelihood of this scenario is diminished by the fact that Death is not mentioned until after these lines are spoken, and by the fact that there is an analogue (as we shall see) in Vercelli IV for separate and consecutive addresses spoken by the wicked soul to the body and to Death, which provides a unique parallel for Vercelli XXII through this particular arrangement.⁶⁷ A second option is to assume that the soul is

speaking to one of the devils who torture it. Indeed, in the homilies belonging to group 2, the wicked soul addresses an accompanying devil before accusing the body directly.⁶⁸ This possibility is perhaps supported by the fact that the preceding passage in Vercelli XXII.42–6 mentions devils, while in XXII.63–7 devils are shown to speak back to the soul. The difficulty with this supposition, however, is that at no time in the homily does the soul engage directly with a single devil. Though there is no need to force the interpretation, a clue may perhaps be taken from the *Synonyma* I.19, which presents a *monologue*, delivered by Man to a general audience (here, the bold italics represent approximate translations in the Old English, as identified by Scragg):⁶⁹

Cur infelix natus sum? ***cur in hanc miseram uitam projectus sum*** ? ut quid miser hanc lucem uidi? ut quid misero huius uitae ortus occurrit? Utinam uelocius egrederer a saeculo quam sum ingressus, quacunque iam ratione recederem? sed heu! miseris exspectata mors tarde uenit. ***Cupienti mori jam liceat occumbere.*** Uiuendi enim mihi taedium est, moriendi uotum, sola mihi mors placet.

[Why was I born unhappy? ***Why was I cast into this miserable life*** ? Why, wretched that I am, did I see this light? Why does the beginning of this life happen to the wretched? Would that I might depart from this world more quickly than I entered, so that by whatever reason now I might recede? But alas! Anticipated death comes slowly to the wretched. ***Would that one who desires to die might be allowed to lie down.*** Indeed I am tired of living, it is my hope to die; death alone pleases me.]

Although the Old English author preserves the general content of the grievances found in the source-text, he makes several important changes. To begin with, the homilist omits most of the tautological or characteristically ‘synonymical’ statements contained in the Latin. He also assigns blame to both the soul and the body where there is no attribution of culpability in the Latin source-text. Moreover, the Old English author substantially restructures the lament to make it more uniform. He does so by introducing two clauses that begin with *wa la*, which are followed by three parallel explanations containing an infinitive + *sceolde* to express obligation. The possible rhyme scheme suggested by the pairs *eardigan sceolde* and *geearnigan ... wolde*, as well as *to lifianne* and *to sweltanne*, seems a clear embellishment to the text. Even the word *unlust* (‘un-pleasure’), used uniquely here in the

Vercelli homilies (and presumably because it alliterates with *lifanne*), points to a decorative intent.⁷⁰ More important, the homilist's use of the *wa la* exclamation as the basis for his lament mirrors (with the slight variation of *wa me* or *wa þe* for *wa la*) the structure of the soul's address to the body found in all nine Old English homilies.⁷¹

In addition to formal similarities, the presence of considerable verbal and thematic overlaps between the addresses found in Vercelli XXII and several Old English texts containing the soul's address reveals a more substantive incorporation of intermediary vernacular materials. Direct verbal parallels may be found in relation to group 2 for no fewer than two of the five statements made by the wretched soul in Vercelli XXII (with several other structural connections to be discussed later):⁷²

1 Text 4, Vercelli XXII.48–9:⁷³

Wa la þæt ic æfre swa ungesæligo geboren sceolde weorðan
[Woe that I had to be ever so unfortunate as to be born.]

Text 2a, The 'Macarius' homily:⁷⁴

Wa me earmre! to hwon sceolde ic æfre gesceapen beon
[Woe is wretched me, as to why I was ever created.]

Text 2b, Napier XXIX:⁷⁵

wa me earmre, þæt ic æfre geboren sceolde wurðan
[Woe is wretched me, that I ever had to be born.]

2 Text 4, Vercelli XXII.49–50:⁷⁶

J þæt ic swa earm middangeardes leoht geseon sceolde!
[and that I so wretched had to see the light of the middle-earth]

Text 2a, The 'Macarius' Homily:⁷⁷

Wa me, þæt ic æfre swa earm middaneardes leoht geseon sceolde!
[Woe is me that I ever so wretched had to see the light of the middle-earth.]

Text 2b, Napier XXIX:⁷⁸

wa me earmre, þæt ic æfre middaneardes leoht geseon sceolde, and þæt ic swa mycele beorhtnesse forlætan sceolde
[Woe is wretched me that I ever had to see the light of the middle-earth,
and that I had to abandon so great a brightness.]

The above list of correspondences reveals the closeness of Vercelli XXII to the homilies contained in group 2, and an examination of the wider contexts for these passages reveals still further stylistic and rhetorical connections. Beginning with passage 1 above, it can be seen that while the text of the 'Macarius' homily and

Napier XXIX are similar to each other, the version contained in Napier XXIX is nevertheless closer to Vercelli XXII. The expanded context for the example in Napier XXIX makes this point abundantly clear (emboldened passages and italicized words are to be compared with Vercelli XXII.48–9):⁷⁹

Seo *earme* sawul beseah uppan þone deofol and *earmlice* clypode: ‘***wa me earmre, þæt ic æfre geboren sceolde wurðan, oððe þæt ic æfre sceolde niman eardungstowe on þis fulestan and on þis wyrstan lichaman***, þe wæs a nymende *earmra* manna æhta on unriht. Eala þu *earma* lichama and wurma mete, a þu wunne æfter eorðlicum welum, and a ðu geglengdest þe mid eorðlicum hræglum and forgeate me. Þonne ðu wære glæd and reod and godes hiwes, þonne wæs ic blac and swyðe unrot; þonne þu smercodest and hloge, þonne weop ic biterlice. Eala þu *earma* lichama, nu þu scealt gewurðan to fulan hræwe and wrymum to mete; and ic mid sare and mid geomerunge sceal to helle beon gelæd.

[The *wretched* soul looked upon the devil and *wretchedly* called out: ‘***Woe is wretched me, that I ever had to be born, or that I ever had to take up a dwelling in this foulest and worst body***, which was always seizing the possessions of *wretched* men unjustly. Alas, you *wretched* body and food for worms, always you strove after earthly wealth, and always you adorned yourself with earthly clothes and neglected me. Then you were glad and ruddy and of a good colour, when I was pale and very unhappy; then you smiled and laughed when I wept bitterly. Alas, you *wretched* body, now you must become as a foul corpse and as food for worms; and I with sorrow and with mourning must be led to hell.’]

The lament in Napier XXIX, like that in *Soul and Body* I.52–63, pairs the abuse of riches with the grim fate of sinners. Yet while the poem expresses the lonely condition of the soul bereft of body and riches, Napier XXIX focuses on the severe consequences for hoarding treasures unjustly. Punishment for this sin is emphasized through various kinds of wordplay, as in the repetition of the verb *niman* both to describe the soul’s seizing of the foulest ‘dwelling place’ (*eardungstowe*), namely the corrupt body, and to describe the body’s seizing of the possessions of wretched men (‘*earmra manna æhta*’). Likewise, the repetition of the adjective *earm* (which appears in various forms a total of six times in the passage), to describe both the condition of the men robbed by the body and the present dejection of the soul, provides a sharp irony. While the precise connection between riches and punishment is absent in the immediate text surrounding Vercelli XXII.48–9, the theme appears later in

XXII.179–85 (in a passage for which no direct source has been found), where a comparable link is posited between the evils of hoarding and divine retribution.⁸⁰

In passage 2 above, Napier XXIX yet again provides the closest verbal parallel for Vercelli XXII.49–50, in which the soul laments ever having seen the light of the middle-earth. The version in XXIX states, ‘wa me earmre, þæt ic æfre middaneardeas leoht geseon sceolde, and þæt ic swa mycele beorhtnesse forlætan sceolde’ (‘Woe is wretched me that I ever had to see the light of the middle-earth, and that I had to abandon so great a brightness’).⁸¹ This equivalency far exceeds that between Vercelli XXII and the relevant text in the *Synonyma* I.19, which simply states, ‘ut quid miser hanc lucem uidi?’ (‘Why, miserable, did I see this light?’). The two Old English homilies are also still nearer on this point than they are to the Latin texts of group II, where, for example, the soul laments the loss of heavenly and eternal light through damnation in the pseudo-Augustine *Sermo ad fratres in eremo* LXIX: ‘Heu mihi, quod in ista damnatione posita claritatem aeternam peridi, ex qua olim sine maculata exiui’ (‘Woe is me, that having been placed in this damnation I lost the eternal light, from which I departed once without sin’).⁸² The reference in ‘Le débat’ to the soul’s exile to Egypt and within the ‘valley of perdition’ (*uallem perditionis*) is even more removed from the context found in the Old English versions belonging to group 2.⁸³ The association in the Napier passage of the light with an exile topos likewise provides an important contextualizing agent for the lament in Vercelli XXII, where the soul regrets being born into the light, as it serves for the soul as a reminder of joys from which it has now, through a life of wickedness, been deprived.

As can be seen from the foregoing analysis, Vercelli XXII shares significant verbal parallels with the homilies belonging to group 2 of the soul’s address, and, significantly, is far closer to these Old English homilies than it is to the associated Latin texts in group II. Given the extensiveness of these verbal parallels, it may now be possible to propose a scenario of direct borrowing between those homilies preserved in Vercelli XXII, on the one hand, and Napier XXIX and the ‘Macarius’ homily, on the other, bearing in mind the possibility of even closer variant texts having been lost

in the interim, since, as Donald Scragg has elsewhere concluded, Napier XXIX ‘does not draw on the Vercelli Homilies at any point,’⁸⁴ and more evidence would have to be in place before questioning his baseline proposition. Furthermore, since Napier XXIX demonstrably contains Wulfstanian connections, I am also inclined to accept the tentative chronology proposed recently by Claudia Di Sciacca, wherein Vercelli XXII precedes Napier XXIX, and perhaps also (though she is rightly more cautious on this point) the ‘Macarius’ homily.⁸⁵ At the same time, it seems hardly accidental that the correspondences between Vercelli XXII and the two homilies in group 2 occur at just at those moments where XXII breaks away from the *Synonyma* text. I would therefore add to this equation the notion that the homilist of Vercelli XXII was in all likelihood drawing those very portions of text containing soul-and-body themes (especially where they are added to the *Synonyma* account) from other traditional soul-and-body sources, as the depths of the additional parallels rehearsed at the beginning of this chapter would appear to indicate. One can perhaps easily imagine a scenario in which the homilist of Vercelli XXII gradually inserted soul-and-body themes to the portions of the *Synonyma* he was translating and as he noted opportune moments for including this material.

But a further set of parallels may yet serve further to widen our understanding of the soul-and-body influences behind Vercelli XXII. In the soul’s address rehearsed above, there remains a passage in the lament at XXII.50–1 for which several analogues can be identified: ‘Wa la þæt ic swa lange on minum lichaman eardigan sceolde, þa he me reste geearnigan ne wolde!’ (‘Woe that I had to dwell so long in my body when he (the body) wished not to earn rest for me!’). Here, Vercelli XXII departs substantially from its source in *Synonyma* I.19, which states: ‘utinam uelocius egrederer a saeculo quam sum ingressus, quacunquē iam ratione recederem?’ (‘Would that I might depart from this world more quickly than I entered, so that by whatever reason now I might recede?’). However, a closer grievance to that expressed in Vercelli XXII can perhaps be found in the *wa me* lament featured in Vercelli IV.203–20 (passages in ***bold italics*** contain parallels with the soul’s lament in Vercelli XXII, while those in *plain italics* show correspondences with the wider soul-and-body corpus):⁸⁶

þonne clypað sum sawl to hire lichoman swiðe unrotre stefne 7 unbealdre 7 heofendre, 7 cwyð: ‘Ic wæs gast fram Gode on þe sended, 7 ðu wære eorðan lames. **Wa þe** a in ecnesse! For hwan swenctest ðu me, 7 wlenctest þe in þ[ær]e sceortan tide 7 forgeate me, 7 þas langan woruld ne gemundest? **Wa me** þæt ic þin æfre owiht cuðe, swa unsofte swa ic on þe eardude! La, ðu eorðan lamb 7 dust 7 wyrma gifel, 7 þu wambscyldiga fætels 7 gealstor 7 fulnes 7 hræw, hwig forgeate ðu me 7 þa towearðan tide? Ne bepohtest þu no hu ic on ecnesse lifian sceolde. Ac æghwylce dæge þu murcnodest, 7 þæt wæron þine mæstan sorga, hu þu þine ceolan mid swetmettum afyllan meahtest. 7 me ðu symle forgete mid eallra godra worca gehwylcum. Æghwylce dæge þu geworhtest þine byrðenne scylda? næfre nane ne gebetest. Næs ic næfre in þe aret, **ac a me þuhte þæt wyt wæron to lange ætgædere**. Þonne ic geseah þin ehtan mid sperum 7 mid swyrde oððe mid stenge, þonne fagnode ic þæs, þy me lyste þæt ic wære ute of ðe. Ic geseah on þe, þæt ðu **earnodest me ecre unrotnesse**. Eall þin yfel þe ðu a worhtest, a hie þe wel licodon. 7 þæt wæs þin gamen, hu [ðu] mæst unrihtes geworhtest, 7 hit is nu min hæft.’

[Then a certain soul will call out to her body with a very sad and timid and lamenting voice and say: ‘I was a spirit from God sent into you, and you were of the clay of the earth. **Woe to you** always in eternity. Why did you distress me and exalt yourself in that short time, and forget me and not remember this long-lasting world? **Woe is me** that I ever knew ought of you, so harshly as I dwell within you! Lo, you earthen-loam and dust and *food of worms, and you gluttonous vessel* and poison and foulness and corpse, why did you forget me and the future? You did not at all consider how I should live in eternity. *But each day you grumbled, and they were your greatest sorrows, as to how you might fill your throat with sweet-meats. And you always forgot me (together) with all good works.* Each day you performed your burden of sins and never atoned for a single one. I was never cheered in you, **but always it seemed to me that we two were too long together**. When I saw you attacked with spears and with a sword and with a staff, then I rejoiced at that, because I desired that I would be out of you. I saw in you that **you earned for me eternal sadness**. All of your evils which you always performed, they always pleased you well. And that was your sport, how you could perform the most evil, and it is now my captivity.’]

The lament in Vercelli IV contains parallels that are witnessed in Vercelli XXII, but in no other homily belonging to the soul-and-body corpus. These equivalences can be found at just those moments when the soul bewails the length of time she is forced to dwell in the body, and in her objection concerning the body’s inability to earn happiness for the soul. Though the remainder of the soul’s grievances in the Vercelli IV address do not occur in Vercelli XXII, the homilist of XXII nevertheless shows similar interest in the evils of gluttony: just before the soul’s speech to the body in XXII.45–6, the homilist foretells that ‘se lichoma on eorðan fulnessum tofloweð þe we ær mid wistum feddon’ (‘the

body that we earlier fed with feasts flows away in the foulness of the earth'). The homilist also prescribes at the end of the homily, in XXII.202–3, that we should 'oflinnan þara unarimedra [ofer]metta ⁊ þara gescyndendra gestreona ⁊ þara oftrædra symla ⁊ þara unrihthæmeda' ('desist from those incalculable arrogances, and those impulsive acquisitions, and those frequent banquets, and those fornications'). While Scragg emends the original manuscript reading *metta* to [ofer]*metta* ('pride'), probably to avoid tautology, we might now suppose (through comparison with the *swetmette* of Vercelli IV) that the genitive plural of *mete* ('food') is intended through its repetition to indicate the excess of food.

The above passage from Vercelli IV.208 also importantly contains a range of traditional soul-and-body features, thus demonstrating the homily's intimate connection with the wider corpus. For example, the charge in Vercelli IV, that the wicked body is *wyrma gifel* ('food for worms'), recurs with variance several times throughout this homily, where the body is called *wyrma mete* (at lines 126 [used here in the negative for the blessed body] and 247) and *wyrma gecow* (line 266). These utterances also contain resonances within the larger corpus of soul-and-body material: the phrase *wyrma gifel* occurs verbatim in *Soul and Body I* and II.124, while *wyrma mete* occurs in the 'Macarius' homily and Napier XXIX.⁸⁷ The charge of the body's intemperance while the soul suffered neglect likewise finds a host of parallels in other homilies, for example in the Latin *Sermo ad fratres in eremo* LXIX, where the soul states that 'tu cibariis delicatis te nutriebas, et ego salutem nostram esuriebam. Tu uinum bibebas saporosum, et ego fontem uitae sitiebam' ('you were feeding yourself with delicious foods, and I was hungering for our health. You were drinking delectable wine, and I was thirsting for the font of life').⁸⁸ The message repeats closely in *Soul and Body I*.39–41 (and in *Soul and Body II*.39–41), and is essentially the same: 'Wære þu þe wiste wlanc ond wines sæd, / þrymful þunedest, ond ic ofþyrsted wæs / godes lichoman, gastes dryncas' ('you were proud in eating and sated with wine; majestic you boasted and I thirsted for the body of God, the drink of the spirit'). Both the Old English and Latin versions play ironically on the idea that we will one day become a banquet for worms as a punishment for our gluttony.

Despite the strong connections between the lament in Vercelli IV and the wider corpus of soul-and-body materials, the lament demonstrates other unique parallels with Vercelli XXII. In all three texts (namely Vercelli XXII, its source in the *Synonyma*, and Vercelli IV), there appears a unique address rendered by the soul to Death. This additional speech may reflect the revival of an archaic soul-and-body motif wherein Death was initially cast in the role of the psychopomp for the wicked souls, in place of the more common devils and angels.⁸⁹ What is certain, however, is that in all three texts the speech to Death directly follows the traditional address of the soul. The apostrophe to Death in XXII.52–5 is as follows:⁹⁰

Eawla, deað, swete eart ðu þam earmum 7 þam wædliendum, 7 wunsum eart ðu þam unrotum 7 þam gnorniendum, 7 biter eart ðu ðam weligum þisse worulde, forþan hie forlætan sceolon hira blissa 7 onfoð unrotnessa. Se de[a]ð ælces yfeles 7 eges [ende is]. Selre bið men þæt he swelte þonne he yfele lybbe mid synnum 7 on Godes unwillan sy 7 ungesæglice drohtiende.⁹¹

[Alas, Death, sweet are you to the wretched and the poor, and pleasant are you to the unhappy and the mourning, and bitter are you to the prosperous of this world, for they must lose their pleasures and receive sorrows. Death is the end of each evil and terror. It is better for a man that he should die than he should live evilly with sins and be in God's displeasure and live unhappily.]

This switch to the second person at the beginning of this speech seems to signal the actual presence of an addressee (rather than being a purely abstract exclamation), where there was none previously in the Vercelli XXII soul's address. However, the change is rapid, and liable to be overlooked. Scragg, for one, evidently took these lines as constituting an exclamation in the voice of Isidore, rather than as a formal address by the soul to Death, as he does not use inverted commas to demarcate these lines as speech, as he does for all other addresses in the homily. Scragg similarly edits the speech to Death found in Vercelli IV, though in that case he conflates the soul's speech to Death and the soul's address to the body, by running continuous inverted commas from IV.221–87, rather than separating the speeches between lines 262 and 263. However, it is only through the comparison of the speech in all three texts that this elusive

additional speech to Death becomes clear. Comparing the passage in Vercelli XXII directly with a triple address in the *Synonyma* I.19 shows the extent to which the vernacular version is dependent upon the source-text:

O mors, quam dulcis es miseris! o mors, quam suavis es amare uiuentibus!
quam iucunda es, o mors, tristibus atque moerentibus!

[‘O Death, how sweet are you to miserable ones! O Death, how pleasant are you to those living bitterly. How delightful are you, O Death, to the sad and miserable ones!’]

The vernacular homilist uncharacteristically expands single items found in the Latin into doublets in order to catalogue the victims of Death. While the statements in the Latin source are all ‘synonymical’ in kind, the homilist of Vercelli XXII introduces antithesis through his mention of the bitter death that will come to rich men. This contrast is further emphasized through the addition of a homiletic phrase stating that it is better to die than to live with sins.⁹² The whole of the Old English passage is furthermore rhythmical, and makes artistic use of polyptoton, through the repetition of the dative ending in the first three lines in particular, and may betray poetic inspiration in its use of alliterative pairs.

A similar emphasis on the bitter plight of the damned may be found in the soul’s speech to Death in Vercelli IV.221–62. Here the soul outlines in detail both the sins performed by the body as well as a list of resultant punishments. The entire speech, containing a further triple address to Death, is offered below in order to demonstrate various levels of parallelism (highlighted with *bold italics*):

J swiðe geomre stefne clypað sio sawl: ‘*La, ðu deað*, hwi let þu minne lichoman swa lange lybban on þam unrihte? On anum dæge he oft geworhte unrim scylda, **⁊** nænige gebetan ne wolde, **⁊** in oferfylllo he wæs begriwen on unrihttidum. Þone þearfan **⁊** þone wæðlan he symle forhogode; nane are ne dyde he him, þæt ic hæfde are in ecnesse. Nolde he mid þam lænan drynce gebycgan þone þæs ecan wines. Ac he fylde his wambe mid searumettum **⁊** mid oferfylllo swa ungemetlice þæt ic uneaðe meahte ræste findan. Næs me næfre gyt in him ieoðe to wunianne, nihtes fyrst ne dæges fyrst. Ne ieoðlice næs ic ane nihtes fyrst ne dæges on him, þær ic wiste hu ic utfulge. Ealle are he hæfde, **⁊** nolde he me nanes rymetes on þam geearnian æt ðam ecan deman. *La, ðu deað*, swa manige **⁊** swa mislice swa ge sindon,

hwi ne com eower nan to minum lichoman? Swa lange swa he lifde, ðu me hæfdest forneah forgitenne. Swa me þuhte þæt he moste a lybban 7 næfre deaðes byrgean. Nystes ðu na, hu swiðe he me swencte? On anum dæge he geworhte oft þusend scylda, 7 to nænigre hreowe gehweorfan nolde. Forneah he moste lifian oð domes dæg. Ne let ðu hine no oð swa lange lybban, þy he aht feala to gode gedyde. **Næs he** ælmesgeorn ne bliðheort þam earman, ne arfæst þam elpeodigum; **næs he** glædmod, þæt he Gode aht syllan wolde of his gestreonum; **næs he** rihtwis ne rummod his rihtra gestreona God an to oncnawanne, ne nænig geswenced man ne onfeng reste æt him, ne he nanum hingriendum men mid his beodlafum ne gehealp, ne wurdon þa nacodon bewrogen mid his ealdum hrægle. Oft eodon fram his huse wydwan 7 steopcild, þær hie næfdon are ne frofre æt him, 7 he symlede æt his beodgereordum, þæt ic wæs oft swiðe næh ofðylmed 7 asmorod. **Eala, ðu deað**, hwi noldest ðu niman þara wyrma mete, 7 forlætan me fram þam fulan geolstre 7 þam treowleasan flæscen He wende, þæt his flæsc moste a lifian, 7 he wende þæt his ceole wære his hælend Crist, 7 þæs wende þæt his wamb wære his drihten God, 7 mid eallum þingum he him olyhte, swa he wende þæt hit wære his dryhten. 7 nu hæfð he for þære olecunga ecne deað for his myclan gytsunga unc bæm geearnod. **Þa he** fedde his lichoman orenlicost mid smeamettum, **þa geearnode he me** þæs ecan hungres. **Þa he** swiðost his lichoman drencte unrihttidum, **þa earnode he me** þæs ecan þurstes. **Þa he** his lichoman in idelnesse glengde mid hrægle, **þa earnode he me** þære ecan næcede. **Þa he** oftost tesoword spræc in his onmedlan gælpettunga, **þa earnode he me** þære mæsta[n] gestynþo 7 þara mæstan benda. Þa he swiðust ofermodgode, **þa geearnode he me** þære ecan niðrunga. **Þa he** swiðust oðre men mid tesowordum tæl[d]e in his renceo, **þa earnode he me** þæs ecan teonan.⁹³

[And with a very mournful voice the soul will call out: '**Alas, you Death**, why did you let my body live so long in that wickedness? In one day he often performed countless sins and for none did he wish to atone, and he was steeped in gluttony in proscribed hours. He always despised the needy and the impoverished; he performed no benefit for them, so that I would have benefit in eternity. He did not wish with that transitory drink to buy the eternal wine. But he filled his stomach with delicacies and with gluttony so immoderately that I could not easily find rest. It was never yet easy for me to dwell within him, in the day-time or the night-time; nor was I within him easily for the space of one night nor one day when I knew how I might escape. He had all the benefits, and he did not wish to earn for me any comfort from that before the eternal Judge. **Alas, you Death**, so manifold and various as you are, why did none of you come to my body? As long as (the body) lived, you had nearly forgotten me; so it seemed to me that he must live forever and never taste death. Did you not know how greatly he afflicted me? On a single day he performed often a thousand sins and wished not to turn to any repentance. He might almost live until Doomsday. Nevertheless, you did not let him live so long on that account that he performed anything much for good. **He was not** eager to give alms, nor joyful of heart to the poor, nor merciful to strangers; **nor was he** glad in mind so that he wished to give God any of his possessions; **nor was he** righteous or generous of his rightful possessions to acknowledge God alone,

nor did any afflicted man receive rest from him, nor did he help any hungry man with his table-leavings, nor were the naked wrapped with his old clothing. Often widows and orphans went from his house where they had not benefit or comfort from him, and he dined at his feasts so that I was often nearly choked and throttled. **Alas, you, Death**, why did you wish not to seize that food for worms, and to release me from that foul pus and that faithless flesh? He imagined that his flesh might live forever, and he expected that his throat would be his Savior Christ, and so he expected that his stomach would be his Lord God, and with all things he indulges himself, as he expected that it would be his Lord. And now he has for that indulgence, for that great greediness, earned for us both eternal death. **When he** fed his body most excessively with delicacies, **then he earned for me** eternal hunger. **When he** plied his body most greatly with drink in proscribed hours, **then he earned for me** this eternal thirst. **When he** adorned his body in vanity with clothes, **then he earned for me** that eternal nakedness. **When he** most often spoke harm-words in his prideful ostentations, **then he earned for me** that greatest imprisonment and the greatest bonds. **When he** was most proud, **then he earned for me** that eternal condemnation. **When he** most strongly slandered other men with slanderous harm-words in his pride, **then he earned for me** this eternal injury.']

The speech reads almost as an expansion of the ideas presented in the soul's address to Death in Vercelli XXII.52–5, demonstrating as it does the precise ways in which Death is bitter to 'ðam weligum þisse worulde' ('the wealthy of this world'; XXII.54). As compared with the single *Eawla, deað* ('alas Death') uttered by the soul in Vercelli XXII, the address in Vercelli IV is punctuated three times by the phrase 'La, ðu deað' (or 'Eala ðu deað') at lines 221, 232, and 248. These addresses effectively divide the speech into three main sections, each of which presents a repetition and expansion of sins committed by the body. The list of sins becomes increasingly specific, as can be seen from the homilist's use and repetition of rare compounds such as *beodlafum* ('table-leavings') in IV.243, and *beodgereordum* ('feasts') in IV.246, and *tesoword* ('harm-words') in IV.258 and 261 (*tesowordum*).⁹⁴ Though the list of sins presented here is much more descriptive than that found in Vercelli XXII, there is likewise a sustained interest in the different treatments of the wealthy and the poor, seen in the soul's repeated admonition both against the abuse of the disenfranchised and against gluttony and excess; these abuses are linked through the repetition of the element *-swenc* - in Vercelli IV.236 and 242, which links the affliction of the soul and the affliction of the impoverished.

While the structure is reminiscent of the address in Vercelli

XXII, the content of the passage likely comes from material found outside the corpus of homilies containing the soul's address. In fact, the substance of the address seems remarkably close to an exhortation composed on the evils of gluttony (*oferfylle*) and indulgences (*olehtunge*) found in Vercelli VII.80–118, and perhaps even closer to its source in Chrysostom's homily XXIX on the Epistle to the Hebrews (focusing on Hebrews 12:4–7), as translated into Latin by Mutianus.⁹⁵ Indeed, both Vercelli VII and the Mutianus homily draw upon the same biblical quotation from Philippians 3:19 found in Vercelli IV.249–53, equating the belly of the glutton with its god (for this quotation, see [chapter 6](#), 213), and they also both couch the fate of the glutton in similar terms.⁹⁶ The Latin is cited here for its clearer parallels:

Cum autem mensa remota fuerit, uel postquam erit cibus assumptus, multoque amplius peiorem grauedinem ex illis cibus et distentionem et opressionem mentis habiturus atque somnum morti consimilem; forenses etiam iuges habebis uigilias propter stomachi cruditatem et praecclusionem spiritus interioris, et per molestiam ructationis indigestae, et plurimum maledicturus es tuum uentrem, cum deberes magis intemperantiae uitium atque immoderationis arguere. Non itaque deliciemur deliciis corporis, sed audiamus Paulum dicentem: Carnis curam ne perficiatis in concupiscentiis [Rom. 13:14].⁹⁷

[But when the table is taken away, or after the food has been consumed, one will be like a man who is about to have far worse heaviness from that food, and swelling and oppression of mind and a sleep very like death; you will have public and indeed continual restlessness on account of the indigestion of the stomach and obstruction of the inner spirit and through the annoyance of undigested belching, and you will curse most of all your belly, when you ought rather to blame the vice of intemperance and immoderation. Let us not therefore be delighted by the delights of the body, but let us hear Paul saying: make not provision for the flesh in its desires.]

In this passage, the state of agitation and restlessness produced by glut-tony is obviously reminiscent of the symptoms described in Vercelli IV, and it would not be surprising if the source for the lament to Death in Vercelli IV turned out to be a passage very like this one. For the moment, the association helps to emphasize just how profoundly repetitive the speech in Vercelli IV is in both content and structure, recalling as it does, passages located elsewhere in Vercelli IV and, arguably, also in Vercelli XXII. For example, the soul's complaint to Death about the length of time required to stay in the body (in IV.231–5 and 248–9) recalls those

earlier quoted passages from Vercelli XXII.50–1 and IV.215. Likewise, the catalogue outlining the various tortures the body has earned (*earnode*) for the soul in IV.254–62 repeats the ills the body has won for the soul in XXII.51 and IV.217–18. In addition, the paratactic catalogue at the end of the speech, linked through the repetition of *þa he ... þa he* ('when he ... then he'), which associates sins on earth and punishments in heaven, is reminiscent of those similarly anaphoric catalogues found in Vercelli IV.96–116 and 31–47, and also XXII.186–90.⁹⁸

In view of the features common to both Vercelli XXII and IV, a tentative argument may be made for an association, likely indirect and at some remove, between these homilies. Given the presence of an already intact speech to Death in the *Synonyma*, it is tempting to suppose Vercelli XXII to be the earlier text. However, until more is known about the sources behind Vercelli IV, it is perhaps still safest to suppose the mutual influence of a third-party soul-and-body text containing all the same shared features.⁹⁹ The comparison, however, is still helpful in bringing several points to light. On the one hand, the clear evidence of a connection between Vercelli XXII and several Old English homilies leads us more securely to assume the intermediary influence of a vernacular tradition between Vercelli XXII and its main source in Isidore's *Synonyma*. Still further, the structural and thematic connections between Vercelli IV and XXII enable us to assert the presence of (now) three identifiable texts containing versions of the soul's address, in Vercelli homilies IV and XXII and in the poem known as *Soul and Body I*, thus demonstrating a higher degree of thematic unity within the collection than has previously been allowed. As the survey of soul-and-body materials at the beginning of this chapter indicates, this theme, even when used peripherally within the Vercelli homilies, presents a constant encouragement for reform and opportunity for meditative reflection on the future condition and fate of both body and soul. In Vercelli IV and XXII the shifting emphasis of the focus from the body to the soul provides ample impetus for just such reflection.

The presence of elements drawn from the soul's address in Vercelli XXII also impacts more widely on studies devoted to this theme in both Latin and Old English literature, since it puts

Vercelli XXII on the map as a newly identified ‘soul-and-body homily,’ whose themes will hopefully continue to be explored for what they can tell us about this corpus of material at large. While the author’s reshaping of Isidore’s *Synonyma* to include vernacular intermediary sources is clearly remarkable in its own right, precedents for the reworking of a Latin source through the incorporation of vernacular motifs may be found elsewhere in Old English translations. One provocative analogy can perhaps be found in the adaptation of Boethius’s *Consolation of Philosophy*, sometimes attributed to King Alfred himself,¹⁰⁰ where the translator (undoubtedly inspired by numerous Latin commentaries dedicated to the subject) recasts the dialogue between Boethius and Lady Philosophy to read as a more ‘Christianized’ dialogue between Wisdom and Mind.¹⁰¹ Future research on Old English homilies will surely turn up more ‘converted’ models like the one presented in Vercelli XXII. Certainly, the elaborate webbing of vernacular influences in Vercelli XXII reminds us that while the search for Latin sources has opened up vast resources for the study of homiletic texts, it has paradoxically deafened us in part to what is most immediate: a rich vernacular heritage in prose and poetry.

Building on the notion of thematic connections between the Vercelli texts demonstrated above, the next chapter will offer an analysis of the occurrence and frequency of figurative tropes in all twenty-one prose pieces contained in the Vercelli Book, focusing on the explicit repetition of tropes drawn from identical sources, and on the replication of settings that best accommodate the use of metaphoric language. Although it has been noted generally that the Vercelli homilies tend towards catechetical exhortation and graphic description, the following analysis will attempt to offer a more concrete characterization of the style of the homilies contained in the manuscript as a whole.

6 ‘For the Sake of Beauty and Utility’: The Place of Figurative Language in the Vercelli Homilies

In the introduction to [chapter 4](#), we encountered a well-known image derived from the Old English *Prologue* to Augustine’s *Soliloquies*, in which the author (perhaps King Alfred the Great himself) compared the work of translation and source-gathering to the process of assembling and building a home. As the previous two chapters demonstrated, this process of foraging, combining, and fabricating applies well to the art of the homilist. In the Vercelli homilies themselves, we find similar passages illuminating the role of teachers and spiritual advisers, and, by extension, the function of homilists and preachers. One such simile appears in Vercelli XIX.77–80, which likens the divine readings of scripture to honey, and the righteous who hasten to temples to bees who scurry to their hives: ‘Eall we sceolon efestan to godes temþlum swa swiðe swa ða bion doð to hira hyfe, to þam þæt we magon getreowlice onbyrgean þa swetnesse þæs gastlican huniges of ðam godcundum rædingum’ (‘We all must hasten to God’s temples as vigorously as those bees do to their hives, to the extent that we might truly taste the sweetness of the spiritual honey from the divine readings’).¹ Though according to this figure scripture contains a sweetness intense enough on its own to attract those who are willing, it is clear from the larger context of Vercelli XIX that part of the role of the homilist is to help whet the appetites of his audience, presumably through well-made and alluring prose, so that even the unwilling become hungry for the sustenance that scripture offers.²

It has often been said that the styles represented in the homilies of the Vercelli Book are as different and nuanced as the authors who produced them. Such diversity inevitably makes the task of formal analysis difficult. Attempts in the past have generally relied on comparative approaches, so that the Vercelli homilies have been described (often in contradistinction to the works of Ælfric and Wulfstan) as ‘hortatory, declamatory, and enumerative’ and have been seen to contain themes relating to ‘penitence, judgment, eschatology, and instruction on vices and

virtues and on such basic Christian practices as prayer, fasting, and tithing.’³ Such categories clearly present a useful starting point for thinking about the styles of the Vercelli Book prose, however overdetermined such points of divergence have proved to be. But rather than continue to look to other homiletic collections for additional points of similarity and contrast (an approach that forces again the question of degree of difference), the present chapter will explore the occurrence of figurative tropes within the Vercelli Book homilies as a means of reflecting on both the style and rhetoric of just one highly adaptable feature in the collection as a whole.

The task of evaluating, or even of identifying, figurative language in the Vercelli homilies is laden with complexities. Part of the difficulty lies in the classification of figurative speech as it applies to homiletic texts. Figurative language is usually defined by its ability to generate deliberate divergence from the customary meaning (or order) of words or phrases.⁴ At the level of the phrase, figurative tropes most commonly appear in metaphors and similes, which differ predominantly in their employment of discrete tags to signal comparison. Reduced to their essentials, these figures are composed of two principal parts: the ‘tenor,’ which refers to the subject of the comparison, and the ‘vehicle,’ which refers to the object of the similitude.⁵ While these definitions appear sufficiently unproblematic in and of themselves, significant controversy surrounds the use of the terms ‘literal’ and ‘figurative’ to represent divergent levels of meaning. In post-structuralist debates, for example, the whole question of difference with respect to what is figurative and literal has been met with scepticism, as it has been argued that language itself can never function mimetically, and, by extension, that all language must therefore be seen as intrinsically metaphorical.⁶ The issue, however, is not a new one. Influential even in the formation of modern attitudes towards this subject are early patristic commentaries on the use of rhetorical figures in the Bible. Augustine of Hippo, one of the most prominent commentators on the subject, states in his *De doctrina Christiana* (composed 396–427) that the reason the divisions between figurative and literal levels of meaning in the Bible are so vexed is that interpretation in this setting is always both context-specific and bound up with questions of moral judgment.⁷ To this effect,

Augustine warns doubly against taking ‘figurative or transferred expressions as though they were literal,’ as well as taking ‘literal expressions as though they were figurative,’⁸ all the while maintaining the simultaneous usefulness and artistry of figures properly interpreted and taught.⁹

That Anglo-Saxon authors recognized and made use of such categorical distinctions is clear not only from the analysis of such features in the texts themselves, but also from the surviving Anglo-Saxon rhetorical treatises written on the subject. Though few such treatises were known to have been produced in Anglo-Saxon England (and most of these belong rather to the tradition of the *ars grammatica*),¹⁰ a prominent example can be found in Bede’s *De schematibus et tropis*, which contains a list (complete with commentary and examples) of seventeen schemes and thirteen tropes, adapted and expanded largely from Donatus’s *Ars maior* III.5–6.¹¹ According to Bede, a ‘scheme’ refers properly to the ‘artificial arrangement of words,’ as he explains: ‘quod grammatici Grece schema vocant, nos habitum vel formam vel figuram recte nominamus, quia per hoc quodam modo vestitur et ornatur oratio’ (‘what grammarians call in Greek a “schema,” we properly call a “habit,” or “adornment,” or “figure,” because in this way speech is clothed and adorned’). Bede invokes the same principles of beauty and functionality in his definition of the figurative ‘trope,’ which signifies ‘dictio translata a propria significatione ad non propriam similitudinem ornatus necessitatisue causa’ (‘speech transferred from its own signification to a similitude that is not its own for the sake of ornamentation or necessity’).¹² As Bede explains, metaphors properly belong to this latter category, since they enact a type of *translatio* (‘transference’), generating an exchange between what is ‘actual’ and what is merely (or especially) ‘imagined.’¹³ Although Bede’s *De schematibus et tropis* survives in only two manuscripts dated roughly to the turn of the tenth century, the influence of this work upon vernacular authors throughout the Anglo-Saxon period should not be underestimated.¹⁴ It seems Bede himself intended the treatise for practical use, as he adapted what had become traditional ‘part[s] of the *ars grammatica* to the needs of his monastic students [by] turning the focus of the rhetorical figures definitively onto scripture and away from classical poets.’¹⁵

The currency with which patristic and aesthetic theories of language may be applied to Old English literature has been tested previously in several key studies devoted to the use of figurative language in poetry.¹⁶ By contrast, I am aware of one parallel study of Old English prose, conducted in 1897 by James Waddell Tupper, who presented a meticulous (if generally undigested) list of metaphors and similes in the works of Ælfric (for his two series of *Catholic Homilies*), Wulfstan (according to the homilies identified by Arthur Napier), the Blickling homilies, and the Old English prose translation of Boethius's *De consolazione philosophiae*. Since Tupper's study of the three major Old English homiletic *corpora* omits the Vercelli homilies (which at the time were not fully edited), his analysis offers a useful *comparandum* against which to measure the use of these devices in the collection.

Such an examination of the use of rhetorical figures in the Vercelli Book may serve more widely still to establish (or possibly resurrect) criteria for the evaluation of style and rhetoric not only within the collection itself, but also in homiletic prose in general. As we shall see, a survey of similes and metaphors in all twenty-three prose texts in the Vercelli manuscript reveals that figurative tropes are not merely ornamental to homiletic discourse, but rather provide a basis for homilists to test and explore perceived boundaries between the literal and figurative levels of meaning. The analysis will also examine further the treatment of miracles and Doomsday events, which are themselves regarded as complex intersections between the 'actual' and the 'fabulous,' as by definition they present aberrations from everyday events. The following discussion will therefore be conducted in two main parts. The first part offers a broad overview of the occurrence and frequency of figurative tropes in the Vercelli Book, pointing out gaps and clusters in the arrangement of this particular feature within the manuscript as a whole. The second part focuses on Vercelli VII and IX in particular, since these homilies exhibit atypically elaborate conceits. Together, these portions are intended to illuminate both the range and purpose of these rhetorical devices in the Vercelli collection as a unit.

Table 4 catalogues instances of similes and metaphors in the Vercelli homilies. It is organized sequentially according to line

reference, and includes notations on content, form, and possible sources. Though the study is intended to be thorough, it is not complete (and it is doubtful whether a clear consensus could be reached). For example, the survey does not take into consideration individual word-kennings, except where these fit a larger tropological pattern. Likewise, in rare cases, the subtle nature of a given comparison makes it difficult to determine whether there is sufficient distinction between literal and figurative levels of meaning to constitute a figurative trope. While these cases are not represented in the table itself, several are treated in the discussion that follows.¹⁷

As can be seen from the table, the only homilies that do not contain clear examples of either similes or metaphors are Vercelli I, II, V, VI, XV, XVII, and XXI. Within this set of homilies there appear to be discernible patterns that may explain the absence of such rhetorical figures. For example, Vercelli II, XV, and XXI each contain lengthy Doomsday catalogues that forecast future torments and Judgment Day signs. These catalogues, on the whole, emphasize the literal, unembellished prediction of events to come, leaving little room for metaphorical and symbolic language. A typical example occurs in Vercelli II.51–5 (and in a variant form in Vercelli XXI.202–6), which links sinners and beasts:¹⁸

Ðær þa fyrenfullan þonne meahton gewiscan þæt hie næfre ne wæren
acennede fram hiora fædrum 7 modrum, oððe ælc hiora to dumbum
nytenum gewurde. Hwæt, him þonne [þæt] wære leofre þonne eal
middangeard mid gestreonum þe heofon behwylfeð!

[There the sinful then might wish that they were never born from their fathers and mothers, or that each of them might become as dumb beasts. Behold, that (scenario) would then be dearer to them than all the middle-earth and its treasures which heaven arches over!]

Table 4 Metaphors and similes in the Vercelli homilies¹⁹

Vercelli homily	Tenor	Vehicle	Classification	Source/Analogue
III.43–9	Repentance	Fruit	Metaphor	Lk 3:8; derived from Cambridge, Pembroke College 25, item 22
IV.19–21	100 years of life	Blink of an eye	Simile	Possibly adapted from 1 Cor 15:52 ²⁰
IV.121–3	[Blessed] body	House	Metaphor	Cf. Ps 64:5, possibly derived from the <i>Homily on the Three Utterances</i> , ed. Wack and Wright, 190; also cf. 1 Cor 6:19 ²¹
IV.155–61	[Blessed] body	[Series of beautiful forms] ²²	Metaphor/simile	
IV.168–71	[Wicked body]	Earthen loam / stone	Simile	Cf. Job 13:12 ²³
IV.250–3	Gluttonous throat / Gluttonous belly	Christ Saviour / False Lord God	Metaphor	Probably expanded from Phil 3:19
IV.288–94	[Wicked body]	[Series of ugly forms]	Metaphor/simile	
IV.307–21	Devil/Sins	Archer/Arrows	Metaphor	Ultimately adapted from Ps 90
IV.322–32	[Audience]/virtues	[Warriors]/Shields	Metaphor	Cf. Ps 90
VII.38	Gluttonous belly	False [Lord] God	Metaphor	Cf. Phil 3:19; from a Latin translation (by Mutianus) of Chrysostom's homily XXIX on the Epistle to the Hebrews ²⁴
VII.56–66	Self-indulgent women	Pampered trees	Metaphor	Ibid.
VII.75–83	Self-indulgent body / body made bright by the goodness of the soul	[Decrepit house] / Whitened house	Simile	Ibid.
VII.88–93	Gluttonous body	Dung-hill	Simile	Ibid.
VII.110–14	Sins sprung from gluttony / Good deeds sprung from moderation	Worms propagated from stagnant water / Fruit propagated from good earth	Simile	Ibid.
VIII.90–2	Chosen ones	Midday sun	Simile	Possibly inspired by Acts 26:13 ²⁵

²⁴ See further Zacher, 'Source of Vercelli VII.'

²⁵ If there is a connection to Acts 26:13, it is a distant one. The biblical passage is as follows: 'die media in via vidi rex de caelo supra splendorem solis circumfulsisse me lumen et eos qui mecum simul erant' ('At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me, and them that were in company with me'; trans. Douay-Rheims). On the idea that the righteous are to be colour-coded according to their works on Doomsday see Hall, 'Psychedelic Transmogrification,' 320–1. Hall cites a particularly good Old English analogue in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 343 (Homily VI, Irvine, 170), where the righteous are ranked in goodness according to the varied brightness of the stars.

IX.122–30	[The condition of a single night in hell]	[The unexpressed torment that is worse than all the conditions described by the homilist]	Metaphor	
IX.145–9	[Span of] the middle-earth	One prick on a tablet	Metaphor	
IX.151–63	[The condition of a single night in hell]	[The unexpressed torment that is worse than all the conditions described by the homilist]	Metaphor	
IX.185–200	The glory of heaven	[The unexpressed bliss that is better than all of the conditions described by the homilist]	Metaphor	
X.16–17	Mary's womb	Treasure vessel	Metaphor	Cf. Lk 1.28, 42; Ps 18.6–7, and 11–12 ²⁶

26 The passages in Luke, which describe the prophecy that Mary will bear the Christ child, are so commonplace that they do not need citation here. Much more difficult is the language of Mary's womb as a treasure-vessel, which seems ultimately to be linked to passages in Ps 18.6–7 and 11–12, as filtered through largely unidentified passages of exegesis. The biblical lines are as follows: Ps 18.6–7, 'in sole posuit tabernaculum suum et ipse tamquam sponsus procedens de thalamo suo exultavit ut gigans ad currendam viam suam; a summitate caeli egressus eius et occursum eius usque ad summum eius nec est qui se abscondat a calore eius' ('He hath set his tabernacle in the sun; and he, as a bridegroom coming out of his bride chamber, hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way: His going out is from the end of heaven, and his circuit even to the end thereof: and there is no one that can hide himself from his heat'; trans. Douay-Rheims); Ps 18.11–12, 'desiderabilia super aurum et lapidem pretiosum multum et dulciora super mel et favum; etenim servus tuus custodit ea in custodiendis illis retributio multa' ('More to be desired than gold and many precious stones: and sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. For thy servant keepeth them, and in keeping them there is a great reward'; trans. Douay-Rheims). The use of this biblical passage to describe Mary's womb is perhaps most clearly witnessed in *Blickling I* (*Blickling* 7/24–32), which

X.206–20	High powers / Wealth	High home / Tall tree / High cliffs/ Rocks / Great mountains	Metaphor	Perhaps inspired by Ws 6.6 and Lk 12.48; ²⁷ Isidore, <i>Synonyma</i> II.89
X.241–5	Love of treasures	Rain showers	Simile	Cf. <i>Blickling</i> V.59.15–21, itself derived from <i>Admonitio ad filium spirituale</i> (attributed to St Basil) ²⁸

states: 'þa cwæþ se engel to hire, "Se Halga Gast cymeþ ufon on þe, 7 þæs Hehstan mægen þe embseleþ, þæt bið halig Godes Sunu genemend." Eft he cwæþ, "Openige nu þin se fægresta færm 7 se clæna, 7 sy þæt geteld aþened þines innoðes, 7 seo onblawnes þære heofonlican onfærmnesse sy gewindwod on þe. Ond seo gecyrdlice hætu þurh þæt mægen þæs Halgan Gastes seo gestilleþ on þe, 7 sy þin þæt færmlice hrið mid callum fægernessum gefætrwod. Seo rædnes þære rosan lixep on þe, 7 seo hwihtnes þære lifian scineþ on þe, 7 mid callum misenclicum afeddum blostum sy se Cristes brydbur gefætrwod" ('the angel said to her [Mary], "The Holy Spirit will come from above to you, and the might of the Highest will envelop you, who is named the holy Son of God." Again he spoke, "Open now your fairest and pure bosom, and let the tabernacle of your womb be stretched out, and let the inspiration of Heavenly embrace be blown into you; and the natural heat, through the might of the Holy Spirit, shall be calm in you, and let your embracing womb be decked with all fair things. The redness of the rose gleams in you and the whiteness of the lily shines in you, and let Christ's bridal chamber be adorned with every variety of flowers that are brought forth"). It is also tempting to imagine that the same biblical passage as expanded in *Blickling I* may ultimately be linked to the description of the fate of the good soul in Vercelli IV.155–61, discussed below, 196, where the soul is said to take on the form of lilies and roses, and is likened to precious treasures. If this comparison holds, the passage in Vercelli IV functions as a potent example of *imitatio Christi*.

- 27 The quotation from Wisdom was argued as a source by Di Sciacca ('The *Synonyma* by Isidore of Seville', 126).
 28 See further Laura R. McCord, 'A Probable Source for the *ubi sunt* Passage in *Blickling Homily V*', *NM* 82 [1981]: 360–1. McCord identified the source for *Blickling* V.59.15–21 (58) in an excerpt from the *Admonitio ad filium spirituale* describing the passing of joys as being like a stream of water flowing down. Vercelli X.241–5 has been compared to *Blickling* in so far as the figure appears in the context of an *ubi sunt* catalogue. However, Di Sciacca ('The *Synonyma* by Isidore of Seville', 139–41) has since doubted the common ancestry of these two passages, since they do not share clear verbal parallels.

XI.10–17	Patriarchs/Prophets/Apostles/Bishops/Mass-priests / Religious teachers / Churches	Spiritual candles	Metaphor	Caesarius, <i>Sermo ccxv</i>
XI.63–70	[Audience]	Spiritual merchants	Metaphor	Caesarius, <i>Sermo ccxv</i>
XII.58–63	[Audience]	[Spiritual merchants]	Metaphor	
XIII.19–21	Dust of sinews and bones	Gliding shadow	Simile	Cf. Caesarius, <i>Sermo xxxi</i>
XIV.9–14	Devil	Roaring lion	Simile	1 Pet 5.8
XIV.27–33	Life / Avaricious man	Journey / Weary traveller	Metaphor	Cf. Caesarius, <i>Sermo ccxv</i>
XVI.153–70	Trinity	Fire	Metaphor	Possibly derived from Quodvultdeus, <i>De symbolo</i> 2.9.21–31
XVIII.161–5	Wind blowing	Two creatures fighting fire	Simile	Sulpicius Severus, <i>Vita Sancti Martini</i> 14.1–2
XVIII.230–43	Deceitful birds / Flight of devils purged by St Martin	Gluttonous devils / Flight of birds	Simile	Sulpicius Severus, <i>Epistula tertia, ad Basilium</i> 6–8
XVIII.248–50	Evil men / Martin's congregation	Wolves/Flock	Metaphor	Ibid. 9–13
XIX.77–80	Righteous men hastening to temples / Divine readings	Bees hastening to hives / Honey	Simile	Cambridge, Pembroke College 25, item 38
XX.31–4	Almsgiving quenching sin	Water quenching fire	Simile	Cf. Sir 3.33; derived from Cambridge, Pembroke College 25, item 52

XXII.81–3	Righteous tested with hardship	Gold in the furnace	Simile	Cf. Prov 17:3; ²⁹ Isidore, <i>Synonyma</i> I.28
XXII.187–90	Heaven	Bridal chamber	Metaphor	Cf. Ps 18:6; Cf. Mt 9:15, Mk 2:19, and Lc 20:34, 36 ³⁰
XXIII.14–16	Devil	Roaring lion	Simile	1 Pet. 5:8; derived from Felix, <i>Vita Sancti Guthlaci</i> , chap. xxxix ³¹
XXIII.17–24	Devil's temptation	Arrow from a bent bow	Simile	(Ultimately linked to Ps 90); ibid.
XXIII.50–3	Devil	[Archer]	Metaphor	Ibid.
XXIII.79–83	Devil	Useless smoke	Simile	Ibid.

²⁹ Prov 17:3 reads: 'sicut igne probatur argentum et aurum camino ita corda probat Dominus' ('As silver is tried by fire, and gold in the furnace: so the Lord trieth the hearts'; trans. Douay-Rheims).

³⁰ The language of the bridal chamber is ostensibly linked to Ps 18:6 (see above, 189 n. 22; and also cf. Bliccling I [*Bliccling* 9/31–2] and the Pseudo-Augustinian *sermo* 120 [Pl. 39, col. 240B]. See Mt 9:15: 'et ait illis Iesus numquid possunt filii sponsi lugere quamdiu cum illis est sponsus venient autem dies cum auferetur ab eis sponsus et tunc ieiunabunt' ('And Jesus said to them: Can the children of the bridegroom mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they shall fast'; trans. Douay-Rheims); Mk 2:19: 'et ait illis Iesus numquid possunt filii nuptiarum quamdiu sponsus cum illis est ieiunare quanto tempore habent secum sponsum non possunt ieiunare' ('And Jesus saith to them: Can the children of the marriage fast, as long as the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast'; trans. Douay-Rheims); Lk 20:34, 36: 'et ait illis Iesus filii saeculi huius nubunt et traduntur ad nuptias ... neque enim ultra mori poterunt aequales enim angelis sunt et filii sunt Dei cum sint filii resurrectionis' ('And Jesus said to them: The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage ... Neither can they die any more: for they are equal to the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection'; trans. Douay-Rheims). I am grateful to Professor Jane Roberts for pointing out some of these analogues.

³¹ For a discussion of this metaphor as it is adapted in Vercelli XXIII, and possible links in the Latin *Vita* to Evagrius's *Life of Anthony*, see below, 201 and 256–8.

The statement that on Judgment Day it will seem better never to have been born occurs with variation in a wide range of extant Old English texts.³² A comparison with the Old English poem *Soul and Body* I.76–87, also found in the Vercelli manuscript, reveals the extent to which the statements contained in the above portions of Vercelli II and XXI seem by contrast to be lacking in both descriptive detail and figurative language:³³

Forðan þe wære selre swiðe mycle 75
þon[ne] þe wæron ealle eorðan speda
butan þu hie gedælde dryhtne sylfum
þær ðu wurde æt fry[m]ðe fugel oððe fisc on sæ
oððe on eorðan neat ætes tilode
feldgangende feoh butan snyttro 80
oððe on westenne wilddeora
þæt wyrreste þær swa god wolde
ge þeah ðu wære wrymcynna þ[æt] grimmeste
þær swa god wolde 83A
þonne ðu æfre on moldan man gewurde
oððe æfre fulwihte onfon sceolde.³⁴ 85

[Therefore it would be a great deal better for you than if you had all the earth's riches, unless you apportioned them to the Lord Himself, if you had become at creation a fowl, or a fish in the sea, or a beast on the earth (who) tilled for food, a field-going animal without wisdom, or the worst of wild beasts in the desert, if God so wished it, even if you had been the grimmest of worm-kind, if God so wished it, than if you ever on the earth had become a man or ever had to receive baptism.]

The version of this topos contained in *Soul and Body I* presents a considerable expansion of the list of beasts to which sinners may be compared. Though no direct source is known for the catalogue of beasts in *Soul and Body I*, the three creatures listed here may derive from a commentary on the animals created on the fifth and sixth days of Creation and placed under Adam's command; in such a case, the *feldgangende feoh* ('fieldgoing animal') corresponds to the *iumenta* ('cattle'), the *eorþan neat* ('beast of the earth') to the *bestias terrae* ('beasts of the earth'), and the *wyrmcyn* ('worm-kind') to *omne reptile terrae* ('every reptile of the earth') of Genesis 1:24–5.³⁵ The poet wields this list to comment on the lack of intelligence and free will of both domestic and wild animals, and in so doing, emphasizes the ill will and knowing sinfulness of the avaricious man. Though the construction in *Soul and Body I* is neither, strictly speaking, a metaphor nor a simile, the juxtaposition of animal and human behaviours is apparently figurative in its lengthy correlation of (perceived) antithetical conditions. The omission of parallel tropes in Vercelli II and XXI reveals a considerably flattened version of this topos, perhaps again indicative of the kind of unembellished statement regularly exemplified in such Doomsday homilies.³⁶

Vercelli I, V, VI, and XVII (also lacking clear similes or metaphors) likewise make extensive use of biblical narrative and exegesis. The emphasis on the literal in these homilies may stem from the fact that exegesis so often necessitates an exchange between the symbolic, represented by the biblical or gospel pericope, and the literal, represented by the explanation contained in the homily. Here, the transfer is almost always from the symbolic to the literal, an occurrence that can be traced through the distribution and use of the verbal and nominal element *-tac(e)n-*, which, as its modern English cognate 'token' suggests, enacts precisely this type of trade between the figurative and the literal.³⁷ While the process of biblical interpretation does not itself preclude the use of figurative language (as is demonstrated, for example, by the wide range of metaphors and similes contained in Ælfric's homilies),³⁸ the emphasis on the application of symbolic meaning to worldly events diminishes the likelihood that such rhetorical figures will dominate the text. The concreteness of such descriptions can be tested with reference to a series of near-similes contained within these examples. For

example, a passage in Vercelli VI.22–5 describes a portent for Christ's Incarnation:

Swylce þæt eac geeode þætte siofon nihtum ær Crist geboren wære, þæt sio sunne æt midre nihte ongan scinan swa swa on sumera þonne hio hattost 7 beorhtost scinð. Þæt tacnode þæt he þas eorðlican sunnan nihtes scinende him to gisle beforan sende.

[Likewise, it also happened that for seven nights before Christ was born, the sun in the middle of the night began to shine just as in the summer, when it shines the hottest and brightest. That betokened that He sent before him (or them) the earthly sun in the night shining as a token of good faith.]³⁹

The association of the midnight sun with the summer sun presents no more than a mundane comparison, juxtaposing as it does degrees of brightness in relation to the same object.⁴⁰ The repetition of the element *-scin* - ('shine') three times in the passage (at lines VI.23, 24, and 25) allows insufficient disparity between subject and object to generate a figurative trope. A similar explanation applies to a comparison contained in Vercelli I.277–9, which describes the herbs and ointments used to anoint Christ after his descent from the Cross:

Þa com þær [eac] þæs hælendes þegn Nicodemus wæs haten. Brohte þær sume smyrenesse swiðe swete of myrran 7 of oðrum deorwyrpum wyrtrum, 7 geworhte efne swa hit wære hundteontig punda gewæge.

[Then also came there the thane of the saviour called Nicodemus. He brought there a certain very sweet ointment made of myrrh and of other precious herbs, and made even as it were one hundred pounds in weight.]

The passage is adapted from John 19:39: 'Venit autem et Nicodemus qui uenerat ad Iesum nocte primum, ferens mixturam murrae et aloes quasi libras centem' ('However he came, and Nicodemus, who had come to Jesus the first night, carrying a mixture of myrrh and aloe, as if one hundred pounds'; trans. Douay Rheims). The straightforward presentation of Nicodemus's piety does not belong to the realm of exaggeration. Rather, the matter-of-fact tone seems to be in concord with the Augustinian principle that good deeds in the Bible, since they are aimed at the perfection of the soul, are to be taken literally and not figuratively:⁴¹

Demonstrandus est igitur prius modus inueniendae locutionis, propriane an figurata sit. Et iste omnino modus est, ut quidquid in sermone diuino neque ad morum honestatem, neque ad fidei ueritatem proprie referri potest, figuratum esse cognoscas. Morum honestas ad diligendum Deum et proximum, fidei ueritas ad cognoscendum Deum et proximum pertinet. Spes autem sua cuique est in conscientia propria, quemadmodum se sentit ad dilectionem Dei et proximi, cognitionemque proficere.

[Therefore first a method of finding expression should be shown, whether it is literal or figurative. That is entirely the method, so that you may recognize as figurative whatever in divine scripture can be referred neither to respectability of conduct, nor to the truth of literal faith. Respectability of conduct pertains to loving God and one's neighbour, and the truth of faith to recognizing God and one's neighbour. But for each their own hope lies in their own conscience, to the extent that one feels oneself progress in love and in the recognition of God and one's neighbour.]

That Augustine included such a clause, stressing the 'literalness' of injunctions concerning good works, perhaps only highlights further the enduring difficulty of segregating between disparate levels of interpretation.

This kind of blurring between levels of signification is especially apparent in those cases where the comparison seems not so much figurative as contrary to present fact. This is evident both in eschatological homilies, which tend to describe events belonging to a future, unimaginable reality, and in biblically derived examples depicting marvels or fantastic events that are to be interpreted literally. This type of ambiguity may be seen, for example, in the description of the blessed body in Vercelli IV.155–64, after it receives judgment on Doomsday:[42](#)

Þonne bryt se lichoma on manigfealdum bleon; ærest he bið on medmicles mannes hiwe, þonne æt nehstan on þam fægerestan manes hiwe; swa æt nehstan þæt he þara wyrta fægernesse, lilian 7 rosan, 7 þonne swa forð þæt he hæfð gelic hiw golde 7 seolfre 7 swa þam deorwyrðesta[n] gymcynne 7 eorcnanstanum; 7 æt nehstan þæt he glitenað swa steorra, 7 lyht swa mone, 7 beorhtap swa sunna þonne hio biorhtust bið scinende. Þonne æt nyhstan cwyð þæs mildan deman stefn: 'On þyses lichoman hiwe man mæg gesion þæt hit is gelic þe sio sawl him onstæld.'

[Then the body breaks up into many colours; first it is in the form of a small man, then in the next moment (it is) in the form of the fairest man; just as next it has the fairness of those plants, the lily and the rose, and then so forth, so that it has a form like gold and silver, and also the most precious kinds of gems and precious stones; and next, that it glitters like stars and

radiates like the moon, and brightens like the sun when it is shining brightest. Then finally says the voice of the merciful Judge: 'In the form of this body one may see that it is like to that which the soul establishes for him.']

The opening description of the body changing *hiw* ('form') in human form seems to invite literal interpretation,⁴³ while the subsequent tags *swa* ('just as') and *gelic* ('like') raise the expectation of figurative language. As the description of the body becomes more abstract in its various comparisons to brightness and illumination, the language seems to become more metaphorical. However, the message is, overall, a mixed one. The repetition of the phrase *þonne æt nehstan* ('then next') throughout much of the passage, together with the reiteration of individual elements like *-fæger* - ('fair'), which describes the body's comparison to both men and herbs, creates further interpretative ambiguity as it connects the literal with the figurative. The statement at the end of the passage presents a solution for reading this paradigm as it offers a literal, one-to-one correspondence between works performed on earth and the objects and qualities to which the body is likened. In this context, the use of deliberately ambiguous language earlier in the passage serves to heighten the tension between the real and the imagined. It also renders more imaginable the abstract setting of Judgment Day, and in so doing demonstrates the attainability of heavenly rewards.

The analogous description of the fate of the wicked body in Vercelli IV.288–94 further illuminates the tensions between the figurative and the literal.⁴⁴ Parallel to the depiction of the good body as being like the fairest man, the homilist describes the wicked body as being *laðlicum men gelic* ('like to a loathly man'; line 291), itself covered in *laðlicum swate* ('loathly sweat'; line 289). Also like the blessed body, the wicked body changes colour, first by darkening, as is indicated by the verbs *wannað* ('turns livid'; line 291) and *doxaþ* ('grows dark'; line 291), then by growing pale, as the body is described as being *blæc* ('pale'; line 292) and *æhiwe* ('without colour'; line 292), then again by turning *collsweart* ('coal-black'; line 292). The homilist adds the detail that the soul *hiwað on yfel bleoh swa same swa se lichoma, ⁊ bið gyt wyrstan hiwes* ('changes to an evil colour, just as the body,

and is yet of worse appearance'; lines 292–3). Though the sequence is nearly equivalent in structure to the description of the blessed body, the language is more one-dimensional, and the only clear departure from the literal is the compound description of the body as *collsweart* ('coal-black'). The conspicuous absence of figurative language in this passage presents a stark reality of events to come.⁴⁵

Though no source has yet been detected for either of these passages in Vercelli IV, a number of parallels have been identified, most notably in an excerpt from the third of Cassian's *Conferences*, where virtue and sin are said to cloak the soul and give it its bright or dark colour, and where the bad stench of the wicked soul is attributed to its foul sins.⁴⁶ Vercelli IV, however, appears unusual in the concreteness of its description, and in the extent to which body and soul are both implicated in blessedness or sin. In this latter detail, as Hall points out, Vercelli IV significantly departs from the estimation of other prominent Anglo-Saxon writers, such as Alcuin and Ælfric, who maintained that the human soul contains neither colour nor visibility.⁴⁷ Though Vercelli IV expresses what looks like a non-traditional view of the body and soul, it is nevertheless equally invested in the 'literalness' of the depiction.

A second example that arguably displays 'deliberate' ambiguity with regard to the use of 'figurative' language appears in Vercelli XXIII, on the life of Saint Guthlac. As can perhaps be expected from its hagiographical orientation, the homily relates a series of miracles performed by Guthlac, among them the saint's survival of the extreme torment inflicted upon him by a host of fiends. The passage in question, XXIII.92–101, catalogues the terrifying details of the physical appearance of these demons. Although the description is imaginative in its combination of what appears to be human and horse-like features, it is nevertheless offered as an accurate depiction of Guthlac's torturers:⁴⁸

Wæron hie on [on]syne egeslice, 7 hæfdon [micle] heafdu 7 lange sweoran
 7 mæ[ge]re onsyne. Wæron fullice 7 orfyrme on heora bearde, 7 hæfdon
 ruge earan 7 woh neb, egeslice eagan 7 ondrysenlice muðas, 7 heora teð
 wæron horses tuxum gelice, 7 him wæron þa hracan lige afylled, 7 hie
 wæron ondrysenlice on stefne. 7 hie hæfdon wo sceancan 7 micle cneowo 7
 hindan greate 7 misscrence tan, 7 hashrymedon on heora cleopunge, 7 hie
 swa ungemetlice hrymdon 7 foran mid forhtlicum egesum 7

ungeþwærnessum þæt hit þuhte þæt hit eall betweoh heofone ⁊ eorðan
hleoðrode þam egeslicum stefnum.

[They were terrible in countenance, and they had great heads and long necks, and thin countenances. They were foul and filthy in their beards, and they had rough ears, and crooked noses, terrible eyes, and dreadful mouths, and their teeth were like the teeth of a horse, and their throats were filled with fire, and they were dreadful in voice. And they had crooked shanks, and great knees, and great hind-parts, and deformed toes, and they cried out hoarsely in their calling, and they so immoderately cried out, and they went with fearful terror and discord, so that it seemed that it all resounded between heaven and earth with those terrible voices.]

Individual details about the fiends are presented as facts, with two possible exceptions. The first, which states that ‘heora teð wæron horses tuxum gelice’ (‘their teeth were like to the teeth of a horse’), seems to anticipate a simile through its use of the tag *gelic* (‘like’). However, the ‘literalness’ of the comparison is stressed through the inhuman portrayal of their voices, as they are said to have ‘cried out hoarsely’ (*hashrymedon*),⁴⁹ an account that is firmly grounded in the indicative mood. The only genuine departure from the literal occurs in the final statement, which explains that the outcry of the fiends ‘seemed’ (*hit þuhte*) to resound between heaven and earth. However, the literal interpretation of the passage is strengthened by comparison with a similar description in *The Wonders of the East*.⁵⁰ Like the account of the fiends in the Guthlac story, the passage in *Wonders* catalogues the hybrid features of creatures known as *Conopoenae*, or ‘half-dogs’:

Eac swylce þær beoð cende Healfhundingas ða syndon hatene Conopoenas.
Hi habbað horses manan ⁊ eoferes tuxas ⁊ hunda heafda ⁊ heora oroð bið
swylce fyres lig. Þas land beoð neah ðam burgum þe beoð eallum
worludwelum gefylled, þæt is on þa suð healfe Aegiptna landes.

[Also there are born there half-dogs who are called Conopenae. They have horse’s manes and boars’ tusks and dogs’ heads and their breath is like a flame of fire. These lands are near the cities that are filled with all the worldly wealth: that is, in the south of Egypt.]

The ‘documentary’ tone of the passage, together with its authenticating geographical detail, helps to anchor the description in the literal. The comparison of the passage in *Wonders* with that in Vercelli XXIII yields some significant verbal

associations, as the reference to *horses tuxum* ('horse's teeth/tusks') in Vercelli XXIII.95 is not dissimilar to the 'horses manan ȝ eoferes tuxas' ('horse's manes and boars' tusks') in *Wonders*. Moreover, in both passages, the creatures are described as being fire-breathing: in Vercelli XXIII.95–6 we are told that 'him wæron þa hracan lige afylled' ('their throats were filled with flame'), while the passage in *Wonders* reveals that 'heora oroð bið swylce fyres lig' ('their breath is like a flame of fire').⁵¹ Though it is difficult to posit any clear textual connection between these descriptions (since both descriptions of the devils in Vercelli XXII can be traced to Felix's *Vita sancti Guthlaci*), the passage in *Wonders* nevertheless presents a useful case in point for representation of the marvellous as 'fact.'

Despite the interpretive confusion generated by these types of apocryphal and miraculous descriptions, other examples recorded in the above table are somewhat easier to characterize. It is, for instance, noteworthy that two versions of the same metaphor appear within two distinct homilies. One such occurrence in Vercelli IV.251–3 and in VII.38 describes the sinner's elevation of the gluttonous body to a god. In both homilies, the metaphor appears ultimately to be adapted from Philippians 3:19, which states that destruction will be the reward for the enemies of Christ 'whose god is their stomach, and [whose] glory is their shame' ('quorum deus uenter et gloria in confusione').

Though these passages share a biblical source, there are marked differences in presentation. In Vercelli VII, the blame (for the conflation of belly and God) is attributed to the Jews, as the Old English homilist conflates the *inimicos crucis Christi* ('enemies of the cross of Christ') cited in Philippians 3:19, with the Jews, mentioned earlier in Philippians 3:4–8. The homilist of Vercelli VII here follows his source, a Latin translation of Chrysostom's Homily XXIX, which describes 'Iudaei qui uitam suam uentri donauere perdendam, quorum deus uenter est' ('the Jews who gave their lives to their stomachs in destruction, whose god is their stomachs'). By contrast, in Vercelli IV, it is the soul itself who imputes the wicked body. The passage in this homily more obviously re-creates the biblical source, as it adds the comparison of the sinner's throat (*ceol*) to the Saviour Christ (*hælend Christ*), and all manners of indulgence to the Lord (*drihten*).⁵²

Figures also repeat in Vercelli XIV.9–14 and XXIII.14–16, both of which liken the devil to a roaring lion. Although both passages are ultimately adapted from 1 Peter 5:8, they are assimilated in different ways into their homiletic contexts.⁵³ In Vercelli XIV, for example, the figure occurs as a direct biblical quotation, alongside a discussion of the fall of Adam and of the exile of human beings from heaven. Together, these passages demonstrate the long-term effects of the devil's temptations. By contrast, Vercelli XXIII, which contains no overt reference to the biblical source, emphasizes the short-term consequences of the devil's deceits as seen through his failed seduction of Saint Guthlac. Both adaptations of the biblical quotation demonstrate the personal and communal, immediate and prolonged, consequences of indulgence in sin.⁵⁴

In addition to verbal parallels, there are other kinds of thematic repetition within the Vercelli Book.⁵⁵ For example, several rhetorical figures in the Vercelli homilies relate to spiritual commerce or exchange.⁵⁶ As can be seen from [table 4](#), this type of metaphor occurs as something of a *leit-motif* in both Vercelli XI and XII.⁵⁷ The repetition of the same trope in these two homilies is generally explained by the fact that Vercelli XI–XIII appear to have been written by a single author, and to have circulated as a group (along with Vercelli XIV, which was presumably composed by another author).⁵⁸ In the case of both Vercelli XI and XII, the homilist exhorts his audiences to consider that they are spiritual merchants who must buy heavenly hoards with earthly goods, and eternal happiness with transitory belongings. The exhortation in Vercelli XI.63–70 is as follows:

We sculon, la, geþencan þæt we syndon gastlice cypemen. We sculon ceapian mid þyssum eorðlicum þingum þa hiofenlican goldhordas 7 mid þyssum hwilendlican þingum þone ecan welan 7 þa awuniendan ... Cypemen hie sculon bion þonne hie ham cumen mid gesundum ceapum orsorge; swa we þonne sculon bion swiðe hycgende 7 swiðe sorgfulle, ða hwile þe we her sien, in ear[n]unga eces lifes, þæt we þonne eft mægen bion gefonde in hiofenlican ham þæs uplican rices.⁵⁹

[We must indeed consider that we are spiritual merchants. We must purchase with these earthly things those heavenly treasures and with these transitory things that eternal and everlasting prosperity ... They must be merchants when they come home with undamaged purchases safely. So we then must be very thoughtful and very sorrowful while we are here, (and

gain) purchase of the eternal life, so that we then afterward may be rejoicing in the heavenly home of the celestial kingdom.]

In addition to promising a fair or even exchange of earthly goods for heavenly benefits, the metaphor also pledges profit and revenue to those who choose to follow the paradigm of the earthly merchant in spiritual affairs. This gain is demonstrated through a series of contrasting adjectives denoting earthly transience (*eorðlicum* and *hwilendlican*) in exchange for heavenly permanence (*hiofenlican... awuniendan... eces... uplican*). Such benefits are reinforced by the assurance of bliss in heaven, where ‘we þonne eft mægen bion gefionde’ (‘we then afterward may be rejoicing’), as a substitution for sobriety on earth, where ‘we þonne sculon bion swiðe hycgende ⁊ swiðe sorgfulle’ (‘we must be very thoughtful and very sorrowful’).⁶⁰ Furthermore, as the homilist suggests through a paronomastic pun, though the present condition is surely *sorgful* (‘sorrowful’), this plight is redeemable through what is delivered *orsorg*, or ‘safe’ (literally ‘without sorrow’) to God.

The Old English version differs significantly from the Latin source-text, Caesarius of Arles’s *sermo* CCXV, in its promise of benefit and gain.⁶¹ The account in the Latin version is as follows:⁶²

Scitis enim, fratres, quia omnes negotiatores et quicumque iter agentes in uia sunt solliciti, ut in patria possint esse securi; et tunc habent ueram laetitiam, quando cum magno lucro peruenire merentur ad patriam. Ita et nos, dilectissimi fratres, tunc animum nostrum praeparemus ad gaudium, quando peruenire meruerimus ad Christum; interim modo gaudeamus in spe, uerum gaudium postea habituri in re.

[For you know, brothers, that all businessmen and whosoever are making a journey are anxious on (their) way, that they can be safe in their homeland; and then they have true happiness, when with abundant money they deserve to reach their homeland. So also, dearest brothers, let us prepare our souls for joy, when we shall be entitled to reach Christ; in the meantime now let us rejoice in anticipation, being about to have true joy afterwards in reality.]

In contrast to the Old English version, in which the spiritual merchant receives a disproportionately favourable compensation, the Latin version presents a simple one-to-one equation, in which the joy experienced by the traveller who reaches his homeland is

set *equal* to the joy experienced by the devout Christian who reaches Christ. This symmetry is reinforced through the repetition of the verb *merere* (also appearing in its deponent form *mereri*), which describes the equivalent entitlement of both earthly and spiritual travellers. These similarities are likewise highlighted by the replication of the (verbal and nominal) element *gaud* - ('joy'), which describes both earthly joy 'in anticipation' (*in spe*) as well as heavenly joy 'in reality' (*in re*). The Latin version is also different from the Old English adaptation in that it never commits to the idea that one can wilfully exchange earthly conditions for heavenly ones.⁶³ Although the Latin explains that it is 'with abundant money' ('cum magno lucro') that the earthly traveller attains his goal, it posits no equivalent condition for the spiritual traveller who desires to enter heaven. Though these metaphors employ roughly the same terms of comparison, they set significantly different expectations.

A similar emphasis upon spiritual commerce in Vercelli XI occurs in XII.51–64, which is concerned with the mechanics of exchange:

Men þa leofestan, we sculon habban mycelne egesan to ussum þam heofonlican hlaforde, ... Mid þam egesan we us geceapiað he[o]fenlicu þing, englas for mannum, lif for deaðe, god for yfele, swete for bitere, leoht for þiestrum, soðfæstnesse for unsaðfæstnesse, yðnesse for niðe, sawle mægen for licumlicre mettrymnesse. Gif we wilnigan rixian mid Criste, bebigen we ða woruldcundan lustas for undeaðlicnesse. ⁊ don we symle eal þas þing mid dryhtnes egesan.⁶⁴

[Dearest people, we must have great fear towards our heavenly Lord ... With that fear we shall trade for ourselves heavenly things, angels for men, life for death, good for evil, sweet for bitter, light for darkness, righteousness for unrighteousness, tranquillity for conflict, the might of the soul for bodily infirmity. If we wish to rule with Christ, let us exchange worldly desires for immortality, and do all these things perpetually with the fear of the Lord.]

The metaphor reads almost as an extension of Vercelli XI.63–70, in that it elaborates upon the terms of exchange described in the previous homily. In addition to detailing the precise items to be traded, the metaphor in Vercelli XII appeals to the idea of *timor domini* ('fear of the Lord') as the homilist advocates the attainment of 'mycelne egesan to ussum þam heofonlican hlaforde' ('great fear towards our heavenly Lord') as the

appropriate currency for the purchase of heavenly joys. Although there is no known Latin source for the metaphor contained in Vercelli XII.51–64,⁶⁵ the list of commodities to be exchanged in Vercelli XII may be ‘original’ to the vernacular author, since it draws upon stock descriptions of heaven and hell for its portrayal of favourable and unfavourable conditions.⁶⁶ This use of contrast in Vercelli XII fittingly echoes the antithetical descriptions of transience and permanence as enumerated in Vercelli XI.

The metaphors of exchange as presented in Vercelli XI and XII are not merely ornamental (though they are rhetorically rich), nor are they in any way incidental to the main subject of Rogationtide. On the contrary, these models of spiritual commerce serve efficiently to contrast examples of profane or ineffectual trade treated in these homilies. For example, at the beginning of Vercelli XII.1–11, we are told about heathen rituals entailing the sacrifice of material goods to their gods. The passage in XII.3–4 states that the heathens set aside three days upon which they ‘onguldon hira godum, ⁊ hira ceapes wæstma ⁊ ealle hira æhta hie hira gode bebudon’ (‘paid up their goods, and the increase of their trade, and they entrusted to their god all their possessions’). The description is echoed in a later account of Rogationtide practices in Vercelli XII.32–4, where it is exhorted that ‘urne ceap ⁊ urne eard ⁊ urne wudu ⁊ eal ure god we sculon Gode bebeodan, ⁊ him þancian þara gesynta þe forþgewitene syndon, swylce eac þara andwearda ⁊ þara towearda’ (‘our trade and our land and our wood, and all our goods we must entrust to God and thank him for the salvation of those who are deceased, and also of those present and in the future’). Through the repetition of the elements *ceap* -, *god* -, and *bebeod*- (or *bebud*-) in the two passages, the homilist demonstrates that although Rogationtide finds its roots in pagan ritual, there are meaningful differences between the two traditions. Moreover, the curious detail that one must trade *wudu* (‘wood’; XII.32) as a precondition for this spiritual exchange, recalls the statement in Vercelli XII.5–6 that the heathen gods were themselves ‘geworhte of treowum, ⁊ of stanum, ⁊ of oðrum untimbrum missenlicum’ (‘made of wood, and stone, and other various materials’). In this seemingly odd detail, the homilist marvellously jests about the vanity of pagan sacrifice and exchange, wherein the trade of earthly goods is made for no apparent material or spiritual gain.

A similar contrast can be detected in the closing tirade on present-day evils in Vercelli XI.90–9 (cited in [chapter 1](#)). In this passage, which has traditionally been used to date the Vercelli manuscript to the late tenth century,⁶⁷ the homilist depicts a time of misfortune in which the churches of God are robbed and plundered by heathen men, and religious orders despoiled by servants of God, kings, bishops, aldermen, and councillors to the people. The idea of plundering and despoiling stands in stark opposition to the terms of peaceful and mutual trade recommended earlier by the homilist. While similar diatribes on the causes of present-day evils occur (for example) in the works of both Ælfric and Wulfstan,⁶⁸ the exhortation in Vercelli XII serves a specific rhetorical function: it advocates the exchange of a failed material economy for a functional and spiritual one. It is through such recommendations that the homilist of both Vercelli XI and XII becomes something of a spiritual merchant himself, enacting through his use of metaphor (which in this case aligns the figurative and the spiritual) the type of spiritual exchange recommended in XI.63–70 and XII.51–64.

The use of financial metaphors to illumine and explain spiritual matters may at first seem to contradict the numerous homiletic exhortations found in the Vercelli Book (and in other Old English homiletic collections) against excessive wealth and greed. Indeed, if the metaphors in Vercelli XI and XII do not defend the possession of material wealth, then they at least appear to approve of the use of commercial metaphors in order to render more concrete complex spiritual concepts (here again differentiating between practice and language). In seeking to explain this attitude, Charles D. Wright has explained in relation to Vercelli XI–XIII that the favourable presentation of money and exchange in these works is perhaps reflective of the audience for whom they may have been written, with a view to vindicating simultaneously the prosperous *and* devout.⁶⁹ This phenomenon is not, however, limited to these homilies in the Vercelli Book. In another study, Malcolm Godden has argued that Ælfric used similar language (sometimes inherited from the Latin sources he cites) to defend the virtuous but wealthy in his collection of Catholic homilies.⁷⁰

Turning to a wider view of the Vercelli Book, both practical

and theoretical conditions of exchange seem to apply. Vercelli IV.8–10, for example, presents a negative adaptation of the exhortation for the audience to act as spiritual merchants, in the statement that on Doomsday ‘Nis nænig medsceat to þæs deorwyrþe on ansyne þæt þær þone dom onwendan mæge, butan he her hwæthwuga to gode gedo’ (‘there is no bribe so dear in kind that it may there change that judgment, unless he here performs something for good’). The metaphor continues to develop in IV.17–18 by urging that we *earnien* (‘earn’) eternal joy, and again in IV.102–16, in a passage detailing the various behaviours necessary for this exchange. Similar exhortations to earn or exchange good deeds for heavenly benefits can also be found in V.189–204 and XXI.87–96. The reverse context, in which Christ himself is figured as a kind of spiritual merchant who has sacrificed his own life for the benefit of others, occurs in Vercelli V.184–91, X.93–7, X.166–76, XVII.68–76, and XXI.96–109.

Although the concentration of such metaphors within the Vercelli Book is surely striking, similar treatments of Christ as a merchant appear with some frequency in Wulfstan’s homiletic writings (as in Wulfstan XIV.35–45 and XX.85–91), and in his legal documents (*Cnut I*.18–18.3; *Cnut II*.308–70; *Institutes of Polity* XXIV.223–5).⁷¹ On occasion, Ælfric too produces a variation of this economic metaphor, as can be seen for example in *CHII*.38 (whose pericope is adapted from Matthew 25:14–30, with Gregory, *Homiliae in euangelia* IX as its source),⁷² in which he uses money to betoken various levels of religious understanding, employing money-lenders to represent church teachers, and financial interest to signify the good deeds that result from religious teaching. Even these few parallels demonstrate a uniformity of expression in the types of metaphors that appear on the subject of trade and affluence in roughly contemporaneous homiletic collections.

If the Vercelli Book can be said to contain a wealth of metaphors of economy, by contrast, there appears to be an economy of the types and styles of figurative tropes sampled in the collection. One distinction should be made between the majority of ‘simple’ metaphors and similes, which compare a single tenor to a vehicle, and those examples of ‘extended’

figures, which compare more than one item in a given trope. The above table demonstrates a clustering of the latter type in Vercelli VII and IX. However, comparison between the various figures in Vercelli VII and IX reveals further subdivisions: while the figures in Vercelli VII convey the subject of the comparison in as few words as possible, the examples in Vercelli IX use a surplus of comparisons in order to highlight (paradoxically) the inability to define or communicate the emotion, event, or item presented in the tenor. It is therefore useful briefly to treat both homilies, not only because they supply practical points of contrast in terms of style and presentation, but also because the types presented in these two homilies generate paradigms for evaluating the types of rhetorical tropes found elsewhere both in the collection itself and in the wider corpus of Old English prose.

Vercelli VII displays an impressive range of figurative language, presenting as it does no fewer than four extended metaphors and similes that draw resourcefully upon examples found in both the natural and the man-made world. Scragg has noted possible biblical analogues for some of these conceits in Romans 13 and 14 and 1 Corinthians 3, but it is only recently, with the discovery of the source of Vercelli VII (in the aforementioned Latin translation of Chrysostom's homily XXIX on the Epistle to the Hebrews), that a full assessment of the originality of the author can be attempted.⁷³ The homily may be divided into two discrete sections. The first portion (VII.1–50) focuses on the sins and good deeds of men in the Bible. This section contains two catalogues, the first of which lists men in the Bible who achieve 'brightness' through toil, and the second the various men who attain hell-torments through overindulgence. The second portion of the homily (VII.51–118) examines primarily the sins and good works performed by women and men, leading off with a discussion of *liðness* ('softness'), which is explained to be the greatest weakness of women. This background helps to contextualize the following metaphor comparing self-indulgent women to pampered trees in Vercelli VII.56–62:

For hwon wene ge þæt wif swa sioces syn of hyra gecynde? Ac hit is swa: of
hira liðan life hie bioð swa tyddre, for þan þe hie symle inne bioð ⁊ noht
hefies ne wyrceap ⁊ hie oft baðiað ⁊ mid wyrtemangum smyriað ⁊ symle

on hnescum beddum hy r[e]stað. Eac ðu meaht þe bet ongytan þæt ic þe soð
secge gif ðu genimst on hwylcum orcearde 7 on windigre stowe hwylc treow
7 hyt asettest on hleowfæste stowe 7 on wæterige stowe. Ðonne meaht ðu
gesion þæt hit sona forloseð þa fægernesse þe hit hæfde on his agenre
stowe.

[Why do you expect that women are so sick from their condition? But it is
so: they are so weak on account of their soft lifestyle, because they are
always inside, and they do not perform heavy labour, and they bathe
frequently, and smear themselves with unguents, and they always lie on soft
beds. Also, you might better understand that I am telling you the truth if you
take a certain tree in some garden and in some windy place, and place it in a
sheltered place and a moist place. Then you might see that it immediately
loses that beauty which it had in its own place.]

The passage is noticeably truncated from its Latin source
(sections 30–3):⁷⁴

Nam unde putatis, aut ex quali ratione mulieres sic esse debiles et infirmas?
Num ex conditione sexus tantum? Nequaquam, sed etiam ex conuersatione
et educatione. Quod enim sub umbraculis degunt quod oleo unguntur, quod
frequentibus lauacris utuntur, quod assidue unguentis abundantibus et
aromatibus perfunduntur, et iacent in straminibus delicatis, hoc est quod eas
tales efficit. Et ut melius hoc agnoscas, attende quod dico: ex horto aliquo in
eremo constituto, qui uentis et tempestatibus uerberatur, sume arbustum
aliquod, et pone in opaco et aquoso loco, et uidebis quod multum a
fortitudine et dignitate sua mutabitur, quam habebat in hoc loco unde
constat esse translatum.

[From what cause or from what kind of reason do you think that women are
so weak and feeble? Surely not from the condition of their sex alone? Not at
all, but also from their lifestyle and upbringing. Because they spend time
under sunshades, because they smear themselves with oil, because they take
frequent baths, because they cover themselves carefully with copious
unguents and perfumes and lie on delicate beds, that is what makes them
like that. And so that you may understand this better, pay heed to what I
say: take a shrub from a garden established in the desert, buffeted by winds
and tempests, and put it in a dark and wet place, and you will see that it will
be much changed with regard to the strength and worth that it had in the
place whence it was taken.]

In both versions, the metaphor of the transplanted tree
communicates the inaction and passivity of the women. It also
highlights the almost organic, or plant-like characteristics of the
women who anoint themselves with herbs, lie on soft beds, and
bathe excessively: just as their avoidance of labour makes them
weak, the tree's avoidance of excessive wind makes it fragile.⁷⁵

But while the Latin stresses the diminution of strength, an outcome that perhaps better modifies the vehicle (here the tree), the Old English, by contrast, emphasizes the loss of beauty, calling special attention to the weakened state of the tenor (here the excessive vanity of women). By shifting the focus of these two figures, each homilist brings into relief the separate themes of indolence and vanity, both of which recur with approbation throughout the homily.

A related trope appears in Vercelli VII.76–83, which compares the overindulgent body to a decaying house:

Gif ðu þonne his lustum symle fulgæst, þonne ne mæg he nawðer ne his mægen ne his fægernysse [gehealdan], ac symle bið sioc ⁊ unrot. Hwæt, ge witon ðæt ælc hus bið þe fægere þe hit man hwitað. Swa eac bið ælc lichoma ðe fægerra þe hine þære sawle scima gebyrhtet. Sona se lichoma sceal bion unfæger, þonne he mid unrotnesse ⁊ mid sare aseted bið, ða cumað of ðam liðan olehtunge. Forðan ic lare þæt we flion þa liðnesse ⁊ flion [þa olehtunge] bysse worulde, ac hie synt swiðe swete.

[If you then follow (the body's) lust, then it may not keep either its strength or its fairness, but it will always be sick and unhappy. Indeed, you know that each house is that much the fairer when one whitens it. So also is the body that much fairer when the radiance of the soul brightens it. Immediately, the body shall be ugly, when it is beset with unhappiness and with sorrow, which come from those soft indulgences. Therefore I teach that we should flee those softnesses, and flee (those indulgences) of this world, though they are very sweet.]

Once again, the Old English represents a considerable simplification of the Latin source (sections 45–9):

Si uero plurimis illud circumsepias morbis, neque flos uel uigor aderit corporis, neque habitus salutaris, sed semper moestum erit et languidum. Scitis autem quia sicut domum pulchram cum quis eraserit, efficit pulchriorem: sic etiam faciem pulchram splendor animae superueniens amplius conuenustat. Si uero in moestitia sit et doloribus constituta, deformis efficitur. Moestitia namque et moerores aegritudines faciunt et dolores; aegritudine autem delicatitudines corporis generantur, quae deliciis constant. Proinde et ob hoc fugite delicias, si quid mihi obeditis et creditis. Sed uoluptatem, inquis, habent deliciae. Sed non tantam uoluptatem, quantas difficultates atque molestias.

[If in truth you hedge it in with very many sicknesses, there will not be the flower and vigour of the body, but it will always be sad and weak. However, you know that just as when someone scrapes down a beautiful house, he

makes it more beautiful: so too the brilliance of the soul coming from above adorns more handsomely a beautiful face. If in truth (the soul)⁷⁶ is established in sadness and feelings of grief, it is made deformed. In fact, sadness and sorrows generate sicknesses and feelings of grief; however, in sickness the delicate features of the body are generated, which are established in delights. So, for that reason flee from delights, if you listen to me and believe me at all. But you say that delights give pleasure. But it is not so much pleasure as difficulties and annoyances.]

The primary difference between the figures is that while the Latin treats the corruption of the soul (an affliction that only subsequently affects the appearance of the body from within), the Old English shifts the focus solely to the body. It is possible that the vernacular author is introducing a subtle theological point, parallel to the blame placed upon both soul and body in the two conceits from Vercelli IV. In the case of Vercelli VII, however, this transfer most likely derives from a misinterpretation of the Latin: while the Latin uses the feminine *constituta* to modify *anima*, the Old English translator may have wrongly assumed that it modified *corpus*, which is neuter; the difference may reflect a defective manuscript at this point. Despite these fundamental differences, both homilists seem to create consciously a disparity between the beauty and construction of the figure itself and the contrasting, and weakened condition of the sickened soul or body, which is compared to a crumbling house. In both versions, the symmetry of the figure hinges complexly upon the four-fold repetition of *-fæger* - ('fair'), playing upon the threefold Latin *pulchr* - ('beautiful'). In the Old English, however, the emphasis upon the body allows for further manipulation of the terms of the comparison: by using the term *lichoma* (lit. 'body-covering') to represent the body, the homilist conjoins the image of the body and the house, urging an abandonment of both false facades. Here again, the use of figurative language seems intended not primarily to achieve a range of meanings beyond the literal, but rather to render more specific and concrete the details of the literal.

These rather mild criticisms of sinful behaviour in Vercelli VII contrast starkly with the similes that follow in the remainder of the homily. A scatological conceit in Vercelli VII.86–93 compares the glutton, who is soft in body and mind, to dung:

þonne ne don we swa, ac hlysten we þæs apostoles lare, Paulus; he cwæð: 'Ne do ge þæs flæsces giman on his willan.' Wyrse is þæt mon ðæs ofer riht bruce þonne hine mon on feltungrepe wiorpe. On þære grepe he wiorðeð to meoxe. Butan tweon, þæs lichoman sceaða on þære wambe he wiorðeð to þam ilcan, and eac ðam lichoma[n] to mettry[m]nesse. Eal þæt man ofer riht þygeð mid unyðnesse, hit him mon sceal framadon. Ac þysses nu feawa gymaþ. Forneah ealra manna mod sint on oferflowende willan onwended.

[Then let us not do so, but let us listen to the teaching of the apostle, Paul. He said: 'Make not provision for the flesh in its desires' [Rom 13:14]. It is worse that one enjoys (food?) against what is right than if one casts it into a dung heap. In that dung heap it becomes as manure. Without a doubt, the injurer of the body will come to the same in the belly, and also to weakness in the body. All that one tastes against what is right with uneasiness, one must put away from (the body). But few now think about this. The minds of nearly all men are turned towards overflowing desire.]

The grotesque link made between the body of the glutton and dung is far more direct (and compact) than the figure provided in the Latin source (sections 51–6):

Non itaque deliciemur deliciis corporis, sed audiamus Paulum dicentem: Carnis curam ne perficiatis in concupiscentiis [Rom 13:14]. Tale namque est in uentre[m] cibos mittere, quale si quisquam eos in cloacam proiciat; magis autem non tale est, sed multo peius. Hic enim fimum tantum operatur sine tua laesione; illic autem plurimos morbos, plurimasque procreat aegritudines. Nutrimentum enim nisi ex sufficientia non fit, quae ualeat sine labore digeri: cum uero plus exuberat, quam reficiendi corporis ratio postulat, non solum nutrimentum nullum, sed etiam corruptio generatur. Sed nullus attendit haec: preoccupatae sunt omnium mentes superflua uoluptate.

[Let us not therefore be delighted by the delights of the body, but let us hear Paul saying: 'Make not provision for the flesh in its desires.' For to send food into the stomach, that is as if someone were to throw it into the privy. Rather it is not like that, but much worse; for in the latter case indeed such dung is produced without harming you, while in the former case it may cause very many weaknesses, and very many diseases. Indeed, nourishment does not happen unless from sufficiency, namely, that which is able to be digested without labour. When in truth (nourishment) is more abundant than reason of feeding the body requires, not only is no nourishment generated, but also indeed corruption. But no one heeds these things: the minds of all are preoccupied with superfluous desire.]

The comparison with the Latin reveals that some of the Old English has been 'lost' in translation: for example, in line 88, the *ðæs* and *hine* appear to share the same antecedent, though it is

presumably *not* the preceding feminine subject *gime* ('provision'; of the preceding line 87). The missing referent probably matched the Latin *cibos* ('food').⁷⁷ Furthermore, although the Old English homilist customarily abbreviates the inflated rhetoric of the Latin figures, here he uses an 'appositive' mechanism to compile scatological elements to excess:⁷⁸ in addition to employing the tautological compound *feltungrip* (the constituent elements of which mean 'dung-hill' and 'privy'),⁷⁹ the homilist repeats synonyms for 'dung (-hill),' such as *feltungrepe*, *grepe*, and *meox*, mimicking verbally the kind of foul 'overflowing' (*oferflow*-) described in the passage.⁸⁰ The technique is noticeably different from that found in the Latin, where we find at the beginning of the passage paronomasia (*deliciemur... deliciis*) and alliteration (*carnis ... curam ... concupiscentiis*), both of which generate a parallel, though perhaps less poignant, sense of excess.

The harsh tone of this scatological comparison is mitigated by the final simile contained in the homily (Vercelli VII.110–14). The homilist explains that while gluttony and overindulgence themselves are not likely to cause damnation, they encourage other illicit and dangerous behaviours:⁸¹

Witodlice ne mæg sio hungriende wamb ænne unrihtlust acennan ne sio gemetegode fyl þon ma. Ac of þære oferfyllre cumað þa unrihtan lustas gelice
 ⁊ on meresteallum wyrmas tyddriað, J of ðære gemetegunge god wiorc gelice
 ⁊ of clænre eorðan gode wæstmæs.

[Indeed, the hungry belly may not give rise to one evil desire, any more than may moderated sufficiency. But from gluttony come those illicit desires, just as in stagnant water worms propagate; and from moderation (come those) good deeds, just as also from pure earth (come those) good fruits.]

As with the other similes and metaphorical figures in Vercelli VII, here too the Old English represents a substantial abbreviation of its Latin source (sections 70–1):

Etenim uenter esuriens amorem non ualet procreare; magis autem neque sufficientia, si fuerit moderata. Quae uero generat absurdas cupiditates, illa est abundantia, quae se deliciis tradit. Sicut enim terra, quae ualde humecta est, generat uermes, et fims cum compluitur, uel cum plurimum sibi humorem retinet; terra uero quae libera est ab humoribus, fructuum foecunditate decoratur, si ex abundantia non corrumpatur aquarum; ac si etiam non colatur, ultro tamen gramina subministrat; si uero colatur,

fructuum foecunditate pollebit.

[For the hungry stomach is not able to generate love (lust?); but rather neither (does) sufficiency, if it is moderated. That which generates foolish lusts is abundance, which surrenders itself to delights. For just as the earth, which is very wet, generates worms, and dung when it rains, or when it retains a lot of fluid in itself; in truth, the earth which is free from fluids is adorned with the richness of fruits, if it is not corrupted by the abundance of water. But even if it is not cultivated, nevertheless it further supplies grass; if in truth it is cultivated, it will be fertile with the richness of fruits.]

In both versions, this organic simile, focusing on growth and reproduction caused by sin and temperance, contrasts with the opening metaphor, which compares the weaknesses of women to the stunted growth of over-tended trees. In the Old English, this antithesis is especially heightened by the presence of an aural pun on the verb *tyddriað* ('propagate') which describes the propagation of worms and fruit above, and the etymologically unrelated *tyddre* ('weak'), which modifies the self-indulgent women depicted in the first metaphor. Still further differences can be seen in technique: for example, the Latin establishes clear cause and effect through the use of verbal and structural parallelism, like that found in the twin phrases 'terra ... fructuum foecunditate decoratur' ('the earth ... is adorned with the richness of fruits') and '[terra] ... fructuum foecunditate pollebit' ('[the earth] will be fertile with the richness of fruits'). The Old English text, however, boils the comparison down to just a few parallel statements, linked through the repeating elements *unriht* - and *gemet* -, which generate neat opposition. By pairing down the passage, the homilist imitates the equilibrium and moderation recommended by its author.

Though the Old English homily is generally very close to the Latin (falling short of its overall word count by only 185 words), the most obvious reductions significantly occur in precisely those passages containing rhetorical figures. This tally suggests that the Old English translator was keenly aware of the mechanics of figurative speech, and how such passages could be wielded to create novel emphases and rhetorical effects. Though the figures at first appear to be mere embellishments, a close study of their language conveys their potential to achieve a range of meanings beyond what is economically representable by the literal

statement.

In contrast to the style of metaphors and similes seen above, which employ a rough symmetry between tenor and vehicle, Vercelli IX utilizes a series of lengthy conceits that express a disproportionate treatment of the items being compared. The noticeably different style is possibly indebted to the fact that homily itself derives from a complex patchwork of mythologies and rhetorical styles. Although it has been argued that Vercelli IX belongs broadly to a tradition of patristic and apocryphal literature in which a vision of the other world is granted to a hermit by an angel or demon,⁸² Charles D. Wright has noted that the Old English version of ‘The Devil’s Account of the Next World’ appears to be more directly informed by the brand of ‘apocryphal cosmology’ present in Hiberno-Latin literature.⁸³ As Wright has also shown, Irish influence also appears to extend to some of the rhetorical figures contained in Vercelli IX.⁸⁴ One particularly skilful conceit in IX.184–200 compares the glory of heaven to an elaborate list of vehicles that modify, but cannot rival or define, its splendour:⁸⁵

Swa ðæt dioful cwæð to ðam ancran: ‘þeah þær sy eal smætegylden mor æt sunnan upgange on neorxnawange, 7 s[e] oferhlif[ige] ealle iorðan, 7 se man mote sittan swa dyre swa cynebearn ofer ðam gyldenan more, 7 hæbbe Salemanes wlite 7 wisdom, 7 him sie eal middangeard on geweald geseald, mid ðam gestreonum þe geond ealne middan[geard] syndon, 7 him sy ælce niht niwe bryd to bedde gelæd 7 sio hæbbe [Iu]none wlite, Saturnes dohtor, 7 ælc stan sy gylden, 7 ealle þa streamas hunige flowen, 7 him þonne ne sie ofer eorðan nænig widerbreca, 7 þeah þe [him] syn ealle sundercræftas 7 wuldorsangas in gesamnode, 7 þeah þe hiene ealle frefran, 7 him sien ealle swetnessa to gelædde mid þam fægerestan gestreonum, 7 him þonne sy singal sumor butan ælcra onwendednes[se], 7 he mote alybban [butan] sare, 7 þonne gif he wære [æ]r her ane niht on heofona rices wuldre, þonne for[lete] he þæt he ær on þyssum wuldre gelyfede, þe ic ær bisæde ofer þæt heofena rice þe he ær on wæs þa ane niht, 7 he eft ne mote to heofena rices wuldre.

[Thus the devil said to the anchorite: ‘Though there be a mountain all of pure gold at sunrise in Paradise, and though it towers over all the earth, and though a man might sit as splendidly as a king’s son above the golden mountain and have Solomon’s beauty and wisdom, and though all the middle-earth be given into his power with the treasures that are throughout all the middle-earth, and though to him each night a new bride be brought to his bed, and she might have Juno’s beauty, daughter of Saturn, and though each stone be golden and all the streams flow with honey, and

though over the earth there be no adversary for him, and though in him are all special skills and glorious songs gathered, and though all comfort him, and all sweetness be conveyed to him with the fairest possessions, and for him there be everlasting summer without any change, and though he might live without sorrow; and then if he had been here (only) one night in the glory of the kingdom of heaven, then he would abandon what he had experienced before in this glory which I've already told you about concerning that kingdom of heaven, in which he was before for one night, (even if) he wouldn't be permitted to come again to the glory of the kingdom of heaven.][86

This technique of using deferred modifiers is perhaps comparable to that found in the more modern 'metaphysical conceit,' popularized especially in the poetry of John Donne, which T.S. Eliot has so aptly defined as 'the elaboration (contrasted with the condensation) of a figure of speech to the farthest stage to which ingenuity can carry it.'⁸⁷ In Vercelli IX the effect is comparable: through a surfeit of comparisons that invoke 'human' pleasures, the homilist paradoxically reveals the impossibility of delimiting the glory of heaven to the confines of 'human' experience.⁸⁸ The disparity between what is described and what is unimaginable is only highlighted further by the absence of Old English stock descriptions of heaven,⁸⁹ and by the almost uncomfortable mixture of biblical and pagan mythology and spiritual and carnal pleasures, which are largely antithetical to conventional depictions of heaven.⁹⁰

The grammar of the conceit likewise removes it from the pale of the imaginable, using the subjunctive mood to relocate the entire comparison from the temporal to the potential. Beginning with the introductory adverbial conjunction *þeah*, the passage's various dislocations from both the traditional and the actual present a false sensation that these descriptions are purely ornamental. However, by putting the rich and dazzling description of heavenly glory in the mouth of the devil, who has himself been exiled from the joys of heaven, the homilist projects an ironic sense of longing. Though the devil's tone of wistfulness is presumably designed to inspire a comparable desire in the audience for the delights and splendours of heaven, the description of sumptuous carnal delights simultaneously reminds us of the need for vigilance against the devil's guiles.

A similar use of rhetoric is to be found in two companion

passages that list the various grievous torments one would rather undergo than spend a single night in hell. The text for these passages is supplied from two later manuscripts, in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 340 (fols. 35v–40v) and Hatton 113 (fols. 75v–6r), since a lacuna appears in Vercelli IX at just this point in the homily, after 63v, where a leaf is missing. Though it is naturally impossible to reconstruct the missing text, the original may have approximated those variant versions contained in Bodley 340 and Hatton 113, since an excerpt roughly the size of passages collated from both these manuscripts would fit remarkably well into the missing portion of text.⁹¹

The first of these, supplemented from Bodley 340 [fols. 35v–40v] employs what Charles D. Wright has termed ‘the hanging sinner motif,’ which matches the extent of torture to the degree of previous sins. The passage appears at Vercelli IX [MS E] 122–30 (emphasis mine):⁹²

For þan gif hwylc man bið on helle ane niht, þonne bið him leofre, gif he þanon mot, þæt he hangie siofon þusend wintra on þam lengestan treowe ufewardum þe ofer sæ standeð on þam hyhstan sæclife, [n syn þa fet gebundene to ðam hehstan telgan] þæt heafod hangige ofdunrihte] þa fet uprihte,] him sige þæt blod ut þurh þone muð,] hine þonne *gesece* ælc þæra yfela þe æfre on helle sy,] hine ælc yð *gesece* mid þam hehstan þe seo sæ forðbringð,] þeah hine ælc tor *gesece* þe on eallum clyfum syndon, þonne wile he eall þis luflice þrowian wið ðan þe he næfre eft helle ne *gesece*].

[Therefore, if any man is in hell one night, then it will be dearer to him if he may travel thence; namely, that he may hang seven thousand winters, on top of the tallest tree that stands above the sea on the highest sea-cliff (and that his feet should be bound to the highest branch, and his head should hang upside down and his feet upright, and the blood flow out through the mouth, and every evil that ever existed in hell should *seek* him, and every wave *seek* him with the highest that the sea brings forth, and every rock should *seek* him which are on all the cliffs; yet he will endure all this willingly provided that he should never again *seek* hell.))

Like the above description of heavenly glory, these conceits are set in the subjunctive mood. They also ironically draw upon human experiences of suffering in order to explain what is beyond the scope of human understanding: the tenor must ultimately be understood as the conditions of a single night in hell, while the vehicles represent the unexpressed torment, which

is worse than all the conditions described by the homilist. In contrast with the unconventional description of the delights of heaven recorded in the passage above, this account of hell (in Vercelli IX.122–30) is infused with a recognizable landscape that is reminiscent of the types of underworld scenes found in *Beowulf*, lines 1357b–76a, and Blickling XVI.209/25–211/5.⁹³ As Wright has demonstrated, the comparison with Blickling XVI is particularly apposite in that in addition to its similar topography (replete with both remote sea-cliffs and water), the passage presents an analogous vision of torment: ‘on ðæm clife hangodan on ðæm isigean bearwum manige swearte saula be heora handum gebundne; ⁊ þa fynd þara on nicra onlicnesse heora gripende wæron, swa swa grædig wulf’ (‘on the cliff hung many black souls on the icy thicket, bound by their hands; and the enemies of those ones, in the likeness of water-monsters, were gripping them just as a greedy wolf’). Although the method of torture is similar in both passages,⁹⁴ the different focus in Vercelli IX is on the impossible length of the torture, described as being ‘siofon þusend wintra’ (‘seven thousand winters’). The duration and monotony of the affliction in Vercelli IX is highlighted by the repetition of the verb *gesece* (‘seek’) four times within the passage. The repetition conjoins the torments afflicted upon the sinner with the sinner’s own reaction to these punishments, presumably with the aim of communicating the enduring permanence of retribution. Yet despite the exacting profusion of details with which the torment is described, the rhetoric of the passage is such that the most memorable detail about the passage is paradoxically that the horror will exceed the already unconscionable torments catalogued.

The mood is echoed in the figure collated from Hatton 113 [fols. 75v–6v],⁹⁵ which compares the din of hell-torments to a series of vehicles that are themselves insufficient to express that clamour (Vercelli IX [MS O] 150–64):

And he, se deofol, þa gyt cwæð to þam ancran: ‘Gyf ænig mann wære ane niht on helle ⁊ he eft wære æfter þam ofalædd, ⁊ ðeah man þone garsecg mid isene utan ymbtynde, ⁊ þonne ealne gefylde mid fyres lige up oþ ðone heofonas hrof, ⁊ utan emsette hine þonne ealne mid bylgeon ⁊ heora æghwylc oðres æthrinan mihte, ⁊ to æghwylcum þæra bylgea wære man geset ⁊ se hæfde Samsones strengðe (se wæs ealra eorðwarena strengest þe ær oððe syððan æfre gewurde) ⁊ þeah man þonne gesette an brad isen þell

ofer þæs fyres hrof, 7 þeah hit wære eall mid mannum afylled 7 ðæra æghwylc hæfde ænne hamor on handa, 7 þeah man bleowe mid eallum þam bylgeon 7 mid þam hameron beote on þæt isene þell and se lig brastlode, ne awacode he næfre for eallum þisum, to ðam werig he wære for þære anre nihthwile.’

[And he, the devil, again said to the anchorite: ‘If any man were one night in hell, and he afterwards were again led away, and though one surrounded the ocean about with iron, and then filled it completely with the fire’s flame up to the roof of heaven, and surrounded it entirely with smith’s bellows, and each of them might touch one another, and a man were placed at each of the bellows, and he had the strength of Samson (he was the strongest of all earth-dwellers that ever might exist either before or after) and though one might set a broad iron plate over the roof of the fire, and though it were all filled with men, and though each had one hammer in hand, and though one might blow with all the bellows, and with the hammer beat on that iron plate and the fire crackled, he would (nevertheless) never awake on account of all of this, because he would be weary on account of the duration of a single night.’]

The (by now) recognizable model of comparison once again employs language metonymically to gesture towards what is utterable. However, the passage is different in its particulars from the preceding metaphor in that the homilist retroactively describes the condition of the soul who has already experienced one night in hell. It is also formally closer to, and therefore presents greater antithesis with, the description of heavenly glory in Vercelli IX.184–200: the description of the span of the ocean filled with flame in IX [MS O] 152–3 contrasts with the height of the mountain in IX.185–6, just as the biblical allusion in IX [MS O] 156–7 to Samson’s strength provides direct antithesis for the passage in IX.187–8 describing Solomon’s beauty and wisdom.

Though it is ultimately indeterminable whether this precise version of the depiction of hell-torments was originally contained in Vercelli IX, the powerful antithesis created by the numerous extended figures of speech in Vercelli IX as a whole demonstrates yet again the way in which figurative tropes may be used as structural devices in Old English homilies. Indeed, this pattern of antithesis may be compared with extensive numerological catalogues found elsewhere in the homily, which likewise operate through a network of contrasts: the catalogue of ‘three deaths’ (*þry deaðas*) in Vercelli IX.32–7 may be contrasted with the ‘three lives’ (*þreo lif*) in IX.38–40, just as the four types of ‘separation’

(*gedæl*) in IX.68–78 may be compared with the ‘five likenesses of hell torments’ (*fif onlicnessa be helle gryre*) in IX.84–113. This type of patterning once again demonstrates, as in Vercelli VII, the degree to which extended metaphors may be at once highly stylized and powerfully functional rhetorical devices.

The sort of extended simile found in Vercelli IX seems to be relatively rare in Old English prose, an effect that is perhaps due to its distinctive Hiberno-Latin influence, yet one might expect to find further examples of the type witnessed in Vercelli VII (drawn from patristic material) in Old English homilies. It is perhaps surprising that in his study of figures sampled from the works of Ælfric, Wulfstan, and the Blickling Book, Tupper turned up only three additional examples of similar extended similes (he did not report upon extended metaphors): in Ælfric *CH I.40 (Dominica II in aduentum Domini)*,⁹⁶ which compares the world to an aging man, Ælfric *CH II.24 (In festiuitate sancti Petri Apostoli III. kalendas iulii)*,⁹⁷ which equates the world to a sometimes turbulent and tranquil sea, and Blickling V (*Dominica V in Quadragesima*), which likens the world to the delay of death.⁹⁸ If Tupper’s count is correct, two patterns emerge. It is first of all striking that all three of these conceits compare the world to human ages and characteristics, a link that clearly finds wider echoes in patristic and Anglo-Saxon treatments of the *aetates mundi*.⁹⁹ It is also significant that so many extended conceits appear to cluster in the Vercelli collection. Though it has often been surmised that the compiler of the Vercelli Book selected the items for his collection on account of their hortatory style and penitential and Doomsday content, it may be that another principle of selection included the heavily figurative style in which so many of these homilies were written.

Despite obvious differences in terms of style, authorship, sources, and audience, it is now possible to conclude that most of the figures in the Vercelli homilies satisfy not one, but both of Bede’s qualifications that this type of construction be used ‘ornatus necessitatis causa’ (‘for the sake of ornamentation or necessity’).¹⁰⁰ But it is perhaps not only this self-conscious blending of art and utility that gives the collection a distinctive character, but also (in certain homilies) the deliberate transgression of literal and figurative levels of meaning

(traditionally held to be distinct), which contribute to the 'graphic' and 'visual' richness of the collection as a whole. In the following chapter it will be suggested that this idea of deliberately 'transgressive' stylistic categories can be tested further through an analysis of genres in the Vercelli Book. This study will examine not only critical approaches to genre as developed by previous editors of the Vercelli collection, but also internal evidence that tests both the validity and rigidity of prescribed generic categories. The chapter will concentrate on the homily devoted to the Life of Saint Guthlac (Vercelli XXIII) as one of the four saints' lives in prose and verse found in the collection (including also Vercelli XVIII, *Elene* and *Andreas*). Though the focus will be on the way in which this one text presents a mixture of hagiographic, homiletic, and narrativistic elements, the chapter seeks more widely to demonstrate the range of generic influences found in the Vercelli Book.

7 At a Crossroads: Generic Ambiguity in the Guthlac Narrative of the Vercelli Book

The whole notion of genre in relation to Old English literature is highly vexed. For Anglo-Saxon studies, as for that of any period, the problem has partially to do with the distorting historicizing lens through which we view these texts. As Joyce Hill argues, ‘What we think we understand as a stable, objectifiable text is in reality something quite fluid, since it is a text which is “rewritten” by its various readers in successive generations in ways determined by prevailing ideologies.’¹ But in thinking about Old English texts, there is an even more pressing difficulty at hand, in that there are so few established and reliable criteria for gauging what Anglo-Saxon authors (and audiences) themselves thought about generic categories. As we saw above (in [chapter 2](#)), for example, there seems to be mounting doubt as to whether we have truly understood, and fairly designated, formal differences between poetry and prose.² While the analysis of a range of aspects of prosody, lexis, syntax, and, to some extent, style has served well in the main to identify broad differences between poetry and prose, even here clear-cut distinctions are sometimes difficult to sustain.

Beyond these broad and troubled categories of poetry and prose, the bulk of modern critical interest in the topic of genre, however, has perhaps not surprisingly developed in reference to the extensive body of so-called saints’ lives, attested in both verse and prose.³ Though it has been traditional to distinguish between two categories of hagiographic accounts, *uita* (applied to the lives of confessors) and *passio* (denoting the accounts of martyrs), for the discerning modern critic, this bifurcated system has seemed too general and prone to disguise the more idiosyncratic features associated with such narratives.⁴ But while the tendency has been to worry over modern divisions within various kinds of hagiography, a question still very much in need of address is whether Anglo-Saxon authors themselves distinguished between different genres of hagiography. The answer is again problematic. The fact that so many of the verse hagiographies tend to depict saints in a secular heroic guise has at times aligned poems such as *Andreas* or *Guthlac A* and *B* more closely with works like *Beowulf*

than with those hagiographical accounts found in liturgical and devotional settings.⁵ This dual perspective is evident not only in the eyes of the present-day beholder, but also significantly in the view of at least some Anglo-Saxon compilers of manuscripts: the so-called *Beowulf* -manuscript (BL, Cotton Vitellius A.XV), with its mixture of the marvellous and the religious (sometimes in the same piece), stands as an important witness to this effect.⁶ Here, by virtue of their shared manuscript context, *Beowulf* is placed in apposition to both Saint Christopher (a canonized but nonetheless dog-headed saint) and Judith, who is treated as something of a biblical hero.⁷

Prose saints' lives present additional difficulties in terms of their classification. The saints' lives composed by Ælfric serve particularly well to highlight this problem, as Ælfric himself appears to have distinguished between lives included (primarily) in his two volumes of his *Catholic Homilies* and those presumably intended for private devotion (specifically those contained in the later collection of *The Lives of Saints*).⁸ Despite the apparent simplicity of this distinction, Malcolm Godden has nevertheless demonstrated, after extensive examination of Ælfric's style, use of sources, and projected audience, that many of the works contained in *The Catholic Homilies* 'suggest the fluidity of generic boundaries and the difficulties of definition.'⁹ As Godden notes concerning the series as a whole (including those twenty-six items included for saints): 'Ælfric calls them *sermones* and in terms of their register, their mode of discourse, they present themselves, at least initially, as addresses to a listening audience in a liturgical context, with occasional reference to 'the Gospel passage that you have just read' and to the saint who "died on this day."¹⁰ Paul Szarmach's more recent investigation of Ælfric's two lives of St Martin, found in the *Catholic Homilies* and in the later *Lives of Saints*, appears to confirm Godden's notion of generic fluidity in these texts, as Szarmach considers Ælfric's extensive revisions in the later piece to be more indicative of style than of genre.¹¹

In examining the role and genre of saints' lives in the Vercelli Book, then, it is necessary to transport this intriguing, if cumbersome, bag of uncertainties. The Vercelli Book contains a total of four saints' lives, two in poetry (*Andreas* and *Elene*, on the eponymous Andrew and Helena, though the latter text is arguably

just as much about the life of Constantine), and two in prose (Vercelli XVIII and XXIII, on Martin and Guthlac respectively). While numerous studies have identified verbal and thematic connections between the verse texts and their sources on the one hand, and parallels with other Old English poetry on the other, very little attention has been given to the question of genre in relation to the two prose texts. However, in a manner that is provocatively analogous to the generic difficulties outlined in relation to Ælfric's hagiographies in the two series of *Catholic Homilies*, we shall see that the Vercelli prose lives present another challenging crux in classification, as neither fits comfortably into the category of prose homily to which the other twenty-one prose pieces in the collection seem to belong.

As set against the other prose texts in the Vercelli Book, one mark of difference that separates Vercelli XVIII and XXIII is that both demonstrate persistently narrative – as opposed to exhortatory or catechetical – styles adapted and adopted from their Latin sources.¹² Yet while the text on St Martin is rather more seamlessly infused with evident homiletic cues (such as exhortation, a traditional homiletic address, and a conclusion), that on Guthlac, with the exception of its very brief homiletic conclusion, conspicuously lacks these hallmark features. Indeed, the most recent editor of the Vercelli homilies, Donald Scragg, has proposed that Vercelli XXIII 'is not a homily in any conventional sense,'¹³ and provides for it instead the more neutral description 'narrative piece,' a sub-generic category that he likewise assigns only to Vercelli I.¹⁴ While Scragg's classification is clearly apposite, a closer examination of the text's language, structure, style, and subject-matter nevertheless demonstrates a much more complex intermixture of hybrid features than perhaps has been previously allowed. A comparison between Vercelli XXIII, its primary Latin source, and a close Old English translation of the latter (in BL, Cotton Vespasian D.xxi, fols. 18–40), highlights important generic differences between even these accounts. While in Vercelli XXIII the examination of such rhetorical features as the use of verb-doublings exposes an underlying homiletic texture, investigation of other features relating to syntax and use of echo-words reveals the broader influence of narrative forms. These intersections are further complicated by the adaptation in Vercelli XXIII of themes that

have parallels in other Latin and vernacular treatments of Guthlac. One such analogous expression can be found in the homilist's attentiveness to 'movement' and 'stasis' as a means of providing a useful index of the saint's physical and spiritual transformations. While such themes have been explored with particular finesse by Manish Sharma with regard to the poems *Guthlac A* and *B*, they have not yet received reciprocal attention in the context of Vercelli XXIII.¹⁵ Furthermore, though it has been argued that the fragmentary Vercelli XXIII presents a careless 'afterthought' within the codex, as we shall see, the text's assimilation of so many different generic features represented elsewhere in the manuscript (in addition to its abundant amalgamation of themes witnessed throughout) makes it in fact an entirely fitting close for the collection.¹⁶

It is clear from the surviving compendium of writings and memorials dedicated to the life of St Guthlac that his popularity was intense. The earliest extant account is that written by Felix of Crowland, sometime in the period 730–49, within a generation of the death of the saint.¹⁷ The narrative itself spans the whole of Guthlac's life, beginning with the

Table 5 Anglo-Saxon Texts Relating to the Life of St Guthlac

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- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | The Latin <i>Vita Sancti Guthlaci</i> by Felix of Crowland (composed 730–49) [hereafter referred to as the Latin <i>uita</i>]; ¹⁸ |
| 2 | The anonymous Old English version of Felix's <i>uita</i> [hereafter referred to as the (Vespasian) <i>Life</i>]; ¹⁹ |
| 3 | The Exeter Book poems <i>Guthlac A</i> and <i>Guthlac B</i> ; ²⁰ |
| 4 | Vercelli Homily XXIII; ²¹ |
| 5 | A short entry in the Old English Martyrology (probably composed in the ninth century); ²² and |
| 6 | The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for AD 714. ²³ |
-

miracle displayed at his birth, followed by an account of his career in the military, his life as a monk at Repton, and his anchoritic retreat to the fens in Crowland, where the saint was periodically tempted and tortured by devils. The *uita* ends with the saint's beatific death, celebrated according to the liturgical calendar on 11 April 714. Apart from this *uita*, the writings and artefacts pertaining to the life and cult of St Guthlac have been extremely well documented, most notably by Jane Roberts, who provides a meticulous survey of the available evidence derived

from hagiography, homilies, poetry, art, liturgy, chronicles, annals, relics, dedications, and popular lore through the Middle Ages.²⁴ Of particular relevance to the present study are those texts produced in the Anglo-Saxon period, as outlined in [table 5](#). Of the three ‘fuller’ vernacular treatments of Guthlac’s life in items 2, 3, and 4 of [table 5](#), Vercelli Homily XXIII has undoubtedly been the slowest to attract critical attention.²⁵ While it is generally customary for saints’ lives and homilies to summarize much more broadly the life of a saint, often mapping some kind of conversionary or transformational moment in the narrative, the Vercelli text unconventionally presents an isolated excerpt translated closely from chapters 28–32 of Felix’s *uita*. To add to this unusual format, the Vercelli text opens abruptly with a hanging reference to ‘þam [fore]sprecenan iglande’ (‘the [afore]said island’) upon which Guthlac built his hermitage. While this type of cross-reference works well in the much longer *uita*, the absence of any such antecedent text in the Vercelli manuscript has led to the opinion that the work as a whole was not only carelessly translated, but also poorly integrated into the collection.²⁶ Paul Szarmach, for one, has corroborated this view on the basis of manuscript evidence, showing that the Vercelli XXIII text, ‘without title, zoomorphic initial, number or any kind of device except a large *wynn* to begin the first *wæs* ... has the marks of a scribal afterthought, either on the part of the Vercelli scribe or the scribe of his exemplar.’²⁷ While Szarmach’s explanation is accurate, it presents only a partial view of the codicological evidence. Celia Sisam and Donald Scragg have both shown that *Elene* and Vercelli XXIII were copied as part of a single booklet into the manuscript, with both quires exhibiting the ‘normal’ eight leaves per quire, with the last leaf having been cut away at the end of quire 19 as the material in Vercelli XXIII comes to a close (see appendix 2).²⁸ It would seem from this patterning that if the scribe had not initially intended to include the Guthlac material, he clearly left room for a text of just its size. Éamonn Ó Carragáin has argued an even stronger case for the deliberate inclusion of the Guthlac text, showing that the seemingly awkward shift from numbered (and, generally, spaced) lections in *Elene*, to a continuous, unnumbered text in Vercelli XXIII is not without precedent in the manuscript, since the same basic arrangement can be shown for the unadorned *Fates of the*

Apostles, which follows directly on the heels of *Andreas* (also divided into spaced fitts).²⁹ Furthermore, while obvious thematic links have been established for *Andreas* and *Fates of the Apostles* (since the latter text treats again the martyrdom of the Apostle Andrew), similar topical associations can be demonstrated between *Elene* and Vercelli XXIII. As Ó Carragáin points out, the motif of disinterment, concerning the true cross in *Elene* and the digging of the *hlæw* ('barrow') and *seap* ('pit') in Vercelli XXIII links the two works as companion pieces.³⁰ It has likewise been argued that the role of Bartholomew as a psychopomp in Vercelli XXIII connects it thematically with other texts in the Vercelli Book, especially those containing soul-and-body materials in Vercelli IV, XXII, and *Soul and Body I* (discussed in [chapter 5](#)), and also in *The Dream of the Rood*, where the figure of the speaking cross leads the Dreamer through a conversionary experience.³¹ As we shall see, still further connections can be made linking Vercelli XXIII to the rest of the codex.

Despite the much abbreviated structure of Vercelli XXIII, its overall narrative is extremely coherent and self-contained. The main topic dealt with in this short piece is the temptation and victory of Guthlac over the devils who attack him, as well as the saint's final translation to heaven at the end of the narrative. Donald G. Scragg has briefly summarized the contents of Vercelli XXIII as follows:³²

lines 1–12: Guthlac's ascetic life

lines 13–46: his fight against despair

lines 47–86: his rejection of temptation

lines 87–141: his transportation by fiends to the gates of hell

lines 142–9: his delivery by St Bartholomew

Though these limited events naturally present only a glimpse of Guthlac's life as it is narrated in the more extensive Latin *uita*, the Vercelli author's concentration on a few key episodes is not at all atypical of Old English hagiographical literature. This technique of foreshortening is to some degree detectable in all four 'hagiographical' pieces contained within the Vercelli Book, as these all present narratives that begin *in medias res* (and specifically in the midst of conflict), rather than with a traditional

account of the saint's childhood and upbringing.

An even better parallel for this abbreviated treatment of Felix's *uita* can be found in the Exeter Book poem *Guthlac A*, which likewise focuses on aspects of the saint's life described in chapters 28–32 of the Latin *uita*, concentrating on the ascetic life of Guthlac, his temptations, and the visionary experiences of the saint.³³ Though Vercelli XXIII and *Guthlac A* have not been linked in terms of verbal parallels or sources (especially since the poem has not yet convincingly been shown to derive from Felix's *uita*), a scenario has recently been proposed that may explain the independent derivation of these two Old English texts from the same general textual model.³⁴ As both Christian Aggeler and Sarah Downey have pointed out, it is a striking coincidence that all vernacular accounts of Guthlac subsequent to the Old English *Life* focus only on abridged portions of Felix's base text, treating the different stages in Guthlac's life as a movable feast of roughly isolated tableaux.³⁵ So, for example, while the Vercelli homily and *Guthlac A* focus on the 'solitary period' of the saint, *Guthlac B* concentrates on the events surrounding the saint's death, the very portion elided, for example, in the later Middle English South English legendary.³⁶ Both scholars suggest that at some point the material contained in the *uita* may have been broken into smaller lections, which could have circulated separately for use *quando uolueris* ('whenever you like'), perhaps especially in a monastic environment, where the lections could be used separately either in the context of the mass or for readings to be used at mealtimes.³⁷

The idea of smaller lections is perhaps reinforced by palaeographical evidence derived from the study of those manuscripts containing the Latin *uita*: it seems that in all three extant Old English glossed versions of the Latin *uita*, glosses appear only after chapter 29, apparently suggesting that at least some readers had a special interest in the eremitic stages of Guthlac's life.³⁸ This finding also correlates with Bertram Colgrave's evidence that a 'second introduction' effectively begins at chapter 28, wherein Felix announces newly that he will turn to a discussion of the solitary life of Guthlac in the fens.³⁹ In light of this evidence, if the homily as it survives in Vercelli XXIII in fact intentionally begins at this 'second introduction,' the choice to

excerpt materials from chapters 28–32 seems far less haphazard than has been supposed. Such a theory is especially intriguing in the context of the Vercelli Book (as we shall see), where the emphasis in Vercelli XXIII on the evils of excessive fasting (especially as the devils attempt to force Guthlac into extreme asceticism) could have served as an instructive exemplum against which to compare similar cautionary treatments of both immoderate fasting (as in Vercelli III.120–2) and the inverse harms of gluttony (for example, in IV.248–56, VII.84–118, and XX.70–81).⁴⁰

These questions about the integrity of the text as it is preserved in Vercelli XXIII must be measured still further against the fuller, and therefore seemingly less problematic, translation of the Latin *uita* in BL, Cotton Vespasian D.xxi (fols. 18–40). On the basis of demonstrable linguistic and syntactical similarities between Vercelli XXIII and the Vespasian *Life*, it has been generally accepted that these texts ‘derive ultimately from the same original translation’ of Felix’s Latin *uita*.⁴¹ It has also for this reason been generally accepted (often prematurely) that the various omissions and additions found in the Vercelli text are likely attributable to the alleged original translator;⁴² the only significant exception is the homiletic ending in Vercelli XXIII, which is now commonly held to be the original work of the Vercelli author.⁴³

However, the relative chronology of the Vercelli text and the Vespasian *Life* has by no means been securely established. Although the Vespasian manuscript dates to the late eleventh century (considerably later than the late-tenth-century Vercelli manuscript), it is impossible to know whether a version of the *Life* circulated at an earlier time, a position that Jane Roberts has most fully argued on the basis of both phonological and linguistic data.⁴⁴ However, Roberts herself ultimately conjectures that the Vercelli text likely pre-dates the Vespasian *Life* on the basis of her extensive examination of both ‘early’ and predominantly ‘poetic’ words in both English versions. While Roberts’s useful data presents a convincing portrait of the lexical differences between the two Old English texts, there are other factors that should perhaps also be weighed. A more traditional approach has been to compare the two vernacular renderings with the numerous

recensions of the Latin *uita*.⁴⁵ The evidence on this account has, however, proved inconclusive, as both Old English versions may at times be seen to present the more authoritative reading. However, as we shall see, a more precise classification of these textual differences is instructive: while the relative authority of the Vespasian *Life* has been demonstrated primarily through parallel omissions in Vercelli XXIII,⁴⁶ the Vercelli text (still very much untried in this regard) exhibits its authority through its more accurate renderings of figurative tropes and central themes. A brief reinvestigation of the evidence is therefore offered below in order to expose some of the complex layerings of authority in Vercelli XXIII.

The question of sources is complicated further by the inability to pinpoint the precise text of the *uita* upon which both Old English texts are alleged to be based. With regard to the twelve extant manuscript witnesses (excluding a fragment not considered by Colgrave) to the Latin *uita*,⁴⁷ Whitney Bolton was the first to isolate a group of related texts from which the Old English *Life* (and, by extension, the Vercelli text, which he does not consider) has been thought to derive.⁴⁸ Bolton singles out the following group of manuscripts, which I present together with Colgrave's manuscript sigla for convenience (Colgrave's group IV):⁴⁹

1 Cambridge, Corpus Christ College 389 (Colgrave's C 2)

2 London, BL, Cotton Nero C.vii (Colgrave's n)

3 London, BL, Cotton Nero E.i (Colgrave's N)

4 Dublin, Trinity College, B.4.3 (Colgrave's E 1)⁵⁰

Bolton delimits his possible sources to these texts on the grounds that the remaining manuscripts designated by Colgrave have omissions in the Latin where readings plainly exist in the Old English *Life*. However, Bolton goes one step further, and points to Colgrave's C 2 and N as representing either the sources themselves for the putative translation upon which the two Old English versions are based, or else close versions of that putative source.⁵¹ Bolton's argument, however, being more a prescription for future research than the result of a conclusive study, is conspicuously lax in terms of its evidence, and is based largely upon the examination of a few glosses and comparisons within the group IV manuscripts; a more detailed study is surely

required.

A closer comparison of the readings contained in both Old English versions with the variants contained in the various manuscripts of the Latin *uita*, however, yields evidence both for and against Bolton's thesis. Contradictory material may be found, for example, in the catalogue describing the appearance of the devils who torment Guthlac in all three texts. So, for example, Colgrave's base text states that these devils had *collis longis* ('long necks'; VSG 102/8), while Vercelli XXIII.93 presents the verbatim translation *lange sweoran* (or *langne sweoran* in the *Vespasian Life* 5.113). However, according to Bolton's thesis, the Old English readings are not derived from this variant version of the text; rather, he attests that they are based on that belonging to Colgrave's group IV, the manuscripts of which unanimously present the nonsensical variant *collibus longis* ('long hills').⁵² Unless emended by the Old English translator himself, who may have spotted this incongruity in the portion of the list devoted to the facial features of the devils, the translation presented in both the Vercelli text and the *Vespasian Life*, then, were likely not derived from the variant version of the *uita* attested by the manuscripts of Colgrave's group IV.

A second example that appears to undermine Bolton's conclusion may be found in a passage describing Bartholomew's first consolation of Guthlac. Colgrave's base text reads as follows (VSG 96/28–30):

Sanctus autem Guthlac, his auditis et creditis fidelissimi amici sui dictis, spiritali gaudio repletus, indissolutam eximiae ualitudinis fidem in Domino Iesu defixit.

[However St Guthlac, having heard and believed the words of his most faithful friend, was filled with spiritual joy, and he fastened his resolute faith of outstanding valour in the Lord Jesus.]

A comparison with Vercelli XXIII.43–5 reveals the following differences (with the major variants from the *Vespasian Life* 4.110–16 in ***bold italics***):⁵³

Ða he, se haliga Guðlac, þas word gehyrde his þæs getrywan freondes, ða wæs he on gæstlicre blisse *n heofoncundre gife swiðe gefeo[n]de*, ⁊ his geleafan fæste in god sylfne getrymede ⁊ fæstnode.

[When he, the Holy Guthlac, heard those words of his friend so true, then he was **greatly rejoicing** in spiritual bliss **and heavenly grace**, and he strengthened and fastened his belief in God Himself.]

The reading *geleafan* ('belief') in the Vercelli version (and also in the *Vespasian Life* not presented here), although congruent with the *fidem* ('belief') of Colgrave's base text, nevertheless differs from the Latin texts of Colgrave's group IV in that these unanimously present the variant *spem* ('hope').⁵⁴ The passage is likewise noteworthy because it presents a model in which the Old English *Life* is closer to the Latin, as it translates 'spiritali gaudio repletus' ('replete with a joy of spirit') as 'þa wæs he mid gastlicre blisse gefyllt' ('then he was filled with spiritual bliss'; 4.112–14). The Vercelli version, by contrast, adds a reference to heavenly grace (*heofoncundre gife*), and may therefore constitute a rhetorical flourish designed to create sound-play between the elements *freond* - ('friend') and *gefeond* e ('rejoicing'), an ironic variation of the well-attested doublet *freond... feond* ('friend ... fiend').⁵⁵

Another passage not considered by Bolton, however, may in fact strengthen his case. Here, both of the Old English texts omit a particularly problematic description in the Latin concerning the benefits of fasting as described to Guthlac by the encroaching devils. Out of several possible readings, the most intelligible is that presented by Colgrave's base text, which in this case is *not* derived from Colgrave's group IV (VSG 98/22–3):

carnem tuam abstinenciae flagellis adflige, et animi tui insolentiam ieunii frange fascibus.

[afflict your flesh with whips of abstinence, and break the insolence of your spirit with the rods of fasting]

The reading presented here, 'ieunii frange fascibus,' occurs in four manuscripts outside Colgrave's group IV, maintaining the theme of self-affliction and flagellation (not to mention its use of alliteration in *f lagellis ad f lige ... f range f ascibus*) that, as Bertram Colgrave and Jane Roberts indicate, is an important iconographic feature in so many of the depictions of St Guthlac.⁵⁶ That neither of the two Old English versions presents parallel readings for this passage may suggest that it was not in their

source or that they chose to omit it for other reasons. Indeed, the Latin variants contained in the other eight surviving manuscripts present still greater difficulty. On two occasions, the antithetical pairing of *ieiunis faucibus* ('with jaws in fasts'; in Colgrave's MSS **HD**) is strange,⁵⁷ but perhaps intelligible, while the seriously bungled variant 'olentiam ieiunii farcibus,' presented in all of the manuscripts of the *uita* contained in group IV (as well as in Colgrave's MSS **C1** and **A**) is nonsensical.⁵⁸ While both Old English versions frequently omit difficult and wordy passages in the Latin, this missed opportunity to exploit the symbol of the whip, which is later turned on him by the devils who 'swungon mid isenum swipum' ('beat [him] with iron whips'; Vercelli XXIII.114–15) may suggest that the Old English translator(s) could not make sense of the available text, in this instance potentially a corrupted one related to those witnessed by the manuscripts of Colgrave's group IV.

In most cases, however, it is simply too difficult to isolate the precise Latin reading on which the Old English may be based. For example, when the devils first suggest to Guthlac the method through which he should fast, the Latin text as edited by Colgrave reports the following prescription (VSG 100/1–4):

Ieiunium ergo non bidui aut tridui aut cotidiane abstinentiae gastrimargia sit, sed septenarum dierum ualida castigatio ieiunium est.

[Let fasting be, therefore, not for two or three days, nor in daily abstinence from gluttony; but rather fasting is firm castigation for seven days.]

A comparison with the Old English versions, here represented by Vercelli XXIII.68–71, yields the following differences:⁵⁹

For ðan þin fæsten ne sceal beon þæt a twega daga fyrst oððe þreora oððe ælce dæge þæt ðu ðe swa on teala micelre forhæfdnesse ahebbe, ac on seofon nihta fyrste[s] fæsten bið to clænsigeanne se man.

[Therefore, your fast should not be for the single space of two days, or of three, or (indeed) each day, so that you may in such great abstinence lift yourself up; but (one should) keep a fast for the space of seven nights in order to cleanse oneself.]

The Old English version contains the reading *forhæfdnesse* ('restraint') for the phrase *abstinentiae gastrimargia* ('in the

abstinence from glut-tony'). In this case, the Old English *forhæfdnesse* is certainly closer to the Latin *castimonia* ('restraint'), contained in all four manuscripts belonging to group IV (as well as in Colgrave's MSS C1, V, and B).⁶⁰ The addition in both Old English versions concerning Guthlac's ability to lift himself up through abstinence is merely a repetition of the idea conveyed in the previous sentence, which in Vercelli XXIII.67–8 states, 'þonne byst ðu ahafen for godes eagan' ('then you will be raised up before God's eyes'), presenting a fair translation of the Latin 'excelsius coram Deo eleuaris' ('you will be elevated higher in the presence of God').⁶¹ While the change apparently introduced here demonstrates the ability of the English translator to modify the Latin, it does not help to pinpoint a single group of Latin manuscripts as a putative source, since the same variant occurs in no fewer than three surviving manuscripts outside of Colgrave's group IV. It appears from the above analysis that Bolton was perhaps too quick to identify his notional source-text: it seems likely that the Old English translator had before him a Latin source that, however much it resembled in broad details those in Colgrave's group IV, nonetheless showed significant variants which can be matched outside that group.

The attempted (albeit unsuccessful) identification of a precise source-text is only the first step towards the analysis of larger stylistic, thematic, and structural commonalities and differences between the Latin and Old English texts, particularly those that help to illuminate questions of genre. Differences in style and syntax may be gauged, for example, through a study of the use of doublets (namely, the pairing of parallel morphological units within the same syntactical division)⁶² in the Latin and Old English texts. Examination of this technique is particularly illuminating, as it has been treated as a common index of vernacular style in relation to texts that derive from Latin sources.⁶³ Gonser, in his edition, has catalogued examples of single words in the Latin that undergo word-doubling in the Old English. Gonser's list for the sections of the Latin *uita* (chapters XXVIII–XXXII) that correspond to Vercelli XXIII enumerates twenty-one examples of word-doubling in the *Vespasian Life* and twenty-two examples in Vercelli XXIII, with the following comparative figures for the Vercelli text and the *Vespasian Life* : two versus four noun-doublets, three versus three adjective-

doublets, and sixteen versus fourteen verb-doublets.⁶⁴

Gonser's list, however, does not account for the occurrence of doublets that are apparently original to the Old English, nor does it include doublets that derive from more than a single word in the Latin, a technique that frequently entails substantial rearrangement of the Latin syntax. The study of these additional word-doublets reveals rather more radical differences between the vernacular adaptations in the Vercelli text and the *Vespasian Life*. It may be seen, for example, that there are an additional twelve doublets in Vercelli XXIII as compared with a further eight in the *Vespasian Life*, with the following differences in their allocation: one versus zero adjective-doublets,⁶⁵ nine versus six verb-doublets,⁶⁶ and two versus two adverb-doublets.⁶⁷ The most obvious difference can once again be seen with respect to verb-doublets, for which the Vercelli text presents a substantially larger total number of examples than the *Vespasian Life*. This disparity perhaps offers a meaningful index for the evaluation of generic differences between the pieces. The most persuasive argument for such a reading remains Peter Clemoes's examination of the use of verb-doublets in *Beowulf*, for which he has noted a demonstrable clustering of these elements in Hrothgar's so-called sermon (lines 1700–84), with only comparatively few examples outside of this passage.⁶⁸ Clemoes observes that since these examples contain 'prevailing ordinary and prosaic' words, they are likely more indicative of prose composition. More important, his comparison with Vercelli homilies XV–XVIII, in which he locates an abundance of verb-doublets,⁶⁹ has led him to the conclusion that this particular type of verb-doubling is first and foremost a homiletic technique.⁷⁰ A closer examination of three verb-doublets that are present in the Vercelli version, but not in the *Vespasian Life* (and also not in Gonser's list), provides a good test case for Clemoes's argument.

The clearest example of a homiletic doublet may be seen in the closing paragraph of Vercelli XXIII. This passage is particularly well documented and discussed, not only because it contains the only conspicuously discernible homiletic portion of the piece (as previously mentioned), but also because the ending is unparalleled in any of the other Latin or vernacular versions of the *Life* of Guthlac. The text from Vercelli XXIII.149–53 is as

follows (emphasis mine):

Þ þa æfter þam fleah se haliga Guðlac mid þam apostole, sancte
Bartholomei, to heofona rices wuldre, Þ hine se hælend þær onfeng, Þ he
þær **leofað** Þ **rixað** in heofona rices wuldre, a butan ende on ecnesse, Amen,
fiat.

[And then after that the holy Guthlac flew with the apostle Saint
Bartholomew to the splendour of the heavenly kingdom, and the Saviour
received him there, and there he **lives and reigns** in the splendour of the
heavenly kingdom, always without end in eternity].

The doublet *leofað* Þ *rixað* (‘lives and reigns’) is of course extremely well attested in Old English prose homilies, very often appearing (as above) at the end of the homily.⁷¹ This doublet appears in this position five more times in the Vercelli Book alone, in texts II, V, XVIII (life of St Martin), XXI, and XXII, the latter two of which are separated from Vercelli XXIII only by the poem *Elene*.⁷² The uniformity of this ending within the Vercelli Book has raised speculation that it is the work of the Vercelli author himself rather than that of an alleged original translator or a mediating scribe. Certainly, the authorial creation of bridging material used to connect consecutive works in a manuscript has been argued cogently elsewhere, most notably by Roy M. Liuzza in relation to the Guthlac poems in the Exeter Book, arguing (albeit controversially) that the first twenty-nine lines of *Guthlac A* may in fact serve as a ‘hinge poem’ linking it to the previous *Christ III*.⁷³ Following this precedent, if the doublet contained at the end of Vercelli XXIII appears to be the work of the author himself, it stands to reason that the appearance of other doublets throughout Vercelli XXIII (especially those that are attested neither in the Latin nor in the *Vespasian Life*) may also be the work of the same author.

Investigation of other doublets that appear in Vercelli XXIII but not in the *Vespasian Life* (and are only loosely connected to the Latin *uita*) reveals further stylistic and thematic differences. One such doublet directly follows the episode in which the devil wounds Guthlac with arrows of pride. Vercelli XXIII.26–9 states the following (emphasis mine):

þa wæs se eadiga wer Guðlac mid þære ormodnesse [þry dagas] **swa
gedrefed** Þ **gewundod**, þæt he sylfa nyste hwider he mid his mode cyrran

[Then for three days the blessed man Guthlac was *so stirred up and wounded* with pride, that he knew not himself whither he wished to turn with his mind.]

The past participle *gedrefed* ('stirred up') together with the verb *cyrran* ('to turn') aptly reflects the confusion and disorientation experienced by Guthlac as he undergoes attack. Though the doublet 'gedrefed ⁊ gewundod' ('stirred up and wounded') is absent in both the Latin and *Vespasian Life*, it serves in the Vercelli text to create verbal parallels with the preceding description in XXIII.20–2 that 'se eadiga wer, mid þære geætredan stræle gewundod wæs þæs werigan gastes' ('the blessed man was wounded with the poison arrow of the accursed spirit'), and that his *mod* ('mind') was 'swiðe gedrefed on him' ('greatly disturbed in him').

The above section containing the doublet roughly translates the following portion of the Latin (VSG 96/10–12):

In tantum enim desperare coepit, ut infinitum et inportabile opus se incoepisse putasset. Deinde Christi famulus trium dierum uicissitudinibus, quo se uerteret, nesciebat.

[He began indeed to despair so utterly that he thought that he had begun an infinite and insupportable labour. Then the servant of Christ, in the course of three days, did not know where he might turn.]

While Vercelli XXIII renders the second part of the passage rather closely, it paraphrases the first portion only loosely. The participial-doublet 'gedrefed ⁊ gewundod' essentially stands in for the Latin adjectives 'infinitum et inportabile,' a linguistic preference that, as we have seen, is characteristic of the style of the text as a whole. Though the association between Guthlac's inner and external turmoil is not here found in the Latin, a similar connection may be found in an earlier passage contained in the *uita* (VSG 96/2–6):

Interea cum telum toxicum atri ueneni sucum infunderet, tum miles Christi totis sensibus turbatus de eo, quod incoeperat, desperare coepit et huc illucque turbulentum animum conuertens, quo solo sederet, nesciebat.

[Meanwhile, when the poisoned arrow had poured in the juice of the black poison, then every sense of the soldier of Christ was stirred up, from which he began to despair about what he had begun. And turning these things over in his stirred-up mind, he knew not in what place to rest alone.]

In this passage, Guthlac is likewise described as *conuertens* ('turning over') these things in his mind. The turbulence of his emotions is highlighted by the repetition of the element *turb* - both within the past participle *turbatus* ('stirred up') and in the adjective *turbulentum* ('stirredup'), revealing both the physical and spiritual effects of his affliction. These descriptions gain even further resonance when considered alongside a number of linked passages in the *uita* that depict the devil as evilly twisting or perverting the minds of men. On one occasion (found in the Latin, but not the Old English accounts), the fiend 'nouas artes nouo pectore uersat' ('turns over anew in his chest brand-new arts'; VSG 94/21-2), and also tests his powers of evil with *uersuta mente* ('a twisted mind'; VSG 94/23). A similar description is later made of the devils who 'leues in auras iter uertentes' ('changing course into the thin air'; VSG 104/13), seize Guthlac to carry him into hell.⁷⁵ As will be discussed later, this 'turning' is present all throughout both the Latin and the Old English prose accounts.

In a second example, the use of doublets in Vercelli XXIII entails an even greater rearrangement of the Latin. The passage in the Latin *uita* describes the suggestion given by the devils to Guthlac that he fast and abstain from earthly pleasures in order to achieve heavenly rewards (VSG 98/24-6, 100/1):

Quanto enim in hoc saeculo frangeris, tanto in perpetuum solidaris: et quanto in praesenti adfligeris, tanto in futuro gaudebis. Nam cum ieiunio prostratus iacueris, tunc excelsius coram Deo eleuaris.

[Indeed, by as much as you are broken down in this world, by so much are you made firm in eternity; likewise, by as much as you are afflicted in the present, by so much you will rejoice in the future. For when you will lie prostrate with fasting, then you will be elevated higher in the presence of God.]

The devils pursue their point through a series of terse and uniformly syntactical sentences: the first two clauses containing the correlatives *quanto... tanto* demonstrate cause and result, while the third containing the correlative *nam... tunc* reveals the

time-frame within which Guthlac can expect to toil and gain reward.

The translation contained in the *Vespasian Life* (5.40–51) closely imitates this syntactical structure (words in ***bold italics*** differ from the passage in Vercelli XXIII, which follows below):

Forþon ***swa myccle*** swa þu þe her on worulde ***swyþor swencst***, swa þu eft byst on ecnysse fæstlicor getrymed; ⁊ swa myccle swa þu on þisum andweardan life ma earfoða drigast, swa myccle þu eft on toweardnysse gefehst; ⁊ þonne þu on fæsten her on worulde ***gestihst***, þonne bist þu ahafen for godes eagum.

[Therefore, ***the more greatly*** you ***toil*** here in the world, so afterwards you will be the more securely strengthened in eternity; and as much as you suffer additional hardships in this present life, by so much afterwards you will rejoice in the future; and when ***you stand*** in fasting here in the world, then you will be raised up before God's eyes.]

The correlatives *swa... swa* in the first two clauses, as well as *þonne... þonne* in the final statement, accurately convey the structure of the Latin. The author likewise creates skillful wordplay on the element *fæst* -, with its disparate meanings demonstrated in *fæstlicor* ('the more securely' or 'hardily') and *on fæsten* ('in fasting'), so aptly demonstrating the connection between action on earth and reward in heaven. The most notable discrepancy in the translation is the substitution of the word *gestihst* ('you will stand') for the Latin *prostratus iacueris* ('you will lie down prostrate'), a change that to some extent diminishes the rhetorical effect of the extremes as expressed in the Latin.

Vercelli XXIII.63–8, while sensitive to both the rhetoric of the Latin and the wordplay of the *Vespasian Life*, nevertheless interprets the same passage with considerably more freedom (emphasis mine):

For þan ***swiððor*** swa ðu þe her on worulde [s]we[n]cst ⁊ ***weccest to forgifenesse þinra gylta***, swa ðu þonne eft bist in ecnessum getrymed ***fæstlicor***, ⁊ swa micle ***swiðor*** swa ðu on þyssan andweardan life ma earfoða dreogest, swa micle þu eft in towyrðnesse ***g[e]fe[h]st***. ⁊ þanne þu bist on fæsten her on worulde ***astreht***, þonne byst ðu ahafen for godes eagan.

[Therefore ***the more*** greatly you toil here in the world and ***afflict yourself for the forgiveness of your transgressions***, so then afterwards you will be the more securely strengthened in eternity; and the more ***greatly*** you suffer

additional hardships in this present life, so the more you will rejoice afterwards in the future; and when you **are prostrated** in fasting here in the world, then you will be raised up before God's eyes.]

Once again, the Vercelli author makes a substantial interpolation, turning the first verb into the (near-rhyming) doublet '[s]we[n]cst and wecest' ('toil and afflict yourself'), which is found in neither the Latin nor the Vespasian *Life*, while adding an explanation about forgiveness for sins.⁷⁶ Since the doublet echoes a subsequent passage in all three texts in which the devils convince Guthlac that he will burn on account of his earlier sins, the addition seems artful.⁷⁷ Though the subject of Guthlac's youthful temperament is well developed in both the longer narratives of the *uita* and the *Life*, in Vercelli XXIII such narratives are reduced to simple suggestions like this one.⁷⁸

The use of doublets as a sustained rhetorical device may best be seen in Vercelli XXIII.102–11 in the passage prior to Guthlac's imprisonment by the devils. This short passage contains a string of no fewer than six verbal doublets, together serving to heighten the dramatic action of this violent scene of torture; the words in *italics* represent doublets in Vercelli XXIII, while those in **bold italics** mark discrepancies between the two Old English versions:

Næs þa nænig ylding to þam syððan hie in þæt hus comon, hie ða sona þone halgan wer eallum limum gebundenum hine *tugon* ⁊ *læddon* ut of ðære cytan, ond hie hine on þæt swearte fenn læddon, ⁊ hine on þa horwihtan wæter wurpon ⁊ *besencton*. Æfter þam hie ***hine bæron*** ⁊ ***læddon*** æfter reðum stowum þæs westenes betuh þa þiccan gewridu þara brymela, þæt eal se lichoma wæs gewundod. Mid þy hie ða lange on þære ***þystran nihte*** hine swa ***læddon*** ⁊ *swencton*, þa leton hie hine *bidan ana* ⁊ *gestandan*. Heton hine þa þæt he of ðam westene gewite, oððe gif he þæt nolde, þæt hie [hine] woldon mid maran brogan *bysmrigan* ⁊ ***wæcan***.⁷⁹

[There was not any delay in that, after they came into that house, they then immediately seized and led the holy man with all his limbs bound out of that small chamber. And they led him into that dark fen and they cast him into the filthy water and submerged him. After that ***they bore him and led him*** from the cruel places of the desert between the thick branches of the brambles, so that his body was entirely wounded. As soon as they for a long time in the ***dark night*** so ***led*** and ***afflicted him***, then they allowed him ***to wait and to stand alone***; they commanded him then that he should depart from that desert; or if he wished not to do so, that they would with greater terror ***ill treat and afflict him***.]

As Gonser has demonstrated, four of these doublets derive from single words in Latin: the Latin *duxerunt* ('they led [him]'; VSG 102/20) has been expanded to 'tugon and læddon' ('they seized and led [him]'), just as *immerserunt* ('they submerged [him]'; VSG 102/21) has been lengthened to 'wurpon 7 besencton' ('they cast and submerged [him]'), *trahebant* ('they dragged [him]'; VSG 102/23) to 'bæron 7 læddon' ('bore and led [him]'), and *sistere... [fecerunt]* ('[they caused him] to stand'; VSG 102/25–6) to '[leton hie hine] bidan ana 7 gestandan' ('[they allowed him] to wait alone and stand'). Gonser, however, does not account for the two additional examples of doublets in the Vercelli text that are formed with only approximate reference to the Latin: both the doublets 'læddon 7 swencton' and 'bysmrigan 7 wæcan' roughly correspond to the Latin clause 'cum magnam partem umbrosae noctis in illis afflictionibus exigebant' ('when they spent a great part of the shadowy night in these afflictions'; VSG 102/24–5). These six examples demonstrate a passage of action in the Old English text that is meant to highlight crisis. The effect is somewhat diminished in the *Vespasian Life* (5.135–58), which does not contain grammatical equivalents for two of these doublets: for the Vercelli 'bæron 7 læddon' ('bore and led'), the *Life* reads only *læddon*, just as for the doublet *læddon 7 swencton* ('led and afflicted'), the *Life* reads only *swencton*.⁸⁰ Here, and indeed in the preceding passages already discussed, the use of verb-doublets in Vercelli XXIII becomes something of a signature style that may tentatively be classified as homiletic.

Other stylistic devices are more difficult to assign to the influence of any one genre. The use of echo-words (namely, the close repetition of identical or etymologically-related morphemes),⁸¹ for example, presents a good example of this kind of ambiguity, because this device is generally held to be a poetic phenomenon. Both Vercelli XXIII and the *Vespasian Life* use echo-words in different places to highlight selective aspects of the Latin *uita*. These patterns are distinguishable at times in contrast to the Latin, and at others solely as a measure of different style between the two Old English pieces. For example, one passage in the *Vespasian Life* uses this kind of repetition to emphasize the extent of Guthlac's moderation in his daily life. The reading in *Vespasian* 4.18–32 is as follows (the passages in ***bold italics*** represent significant omissions or changes in Vercelli XXIII.5–12,

while the words in *simple italics* signify terms connected by wordplay):

þa geþohte he, þæt he naðor ne wyllenes hrægles ne linenes brucan nolde, ac on fellenum gegyrelan þæt he wolde ealle his dagas his *lifes alifian* ; and he hit swa forðgelæstende wæs. Ælce dæge wæs his *bigleofan* swylc *gemetgung* of þære tide, þe he þæt westen eardigan ongan, *þæt he nawiht ne onbyrigde buton berene hlaƿ and wæter; and þonne sunne wæs on setle, þonne bigede he þ[a]* andlyfene, *þe he bigleofode*.

[Then he thought that he would make use of neither woollen nor linen clothes, but that he would *live* all the days of his *life* in apparel made of skins; and so he persisted in it. Each day there was such *moderation* of his food from the time when he began to dwell in that desert, *that he would not taste anything except* barley loaf and water; and when the sun was set, then he tasted that sustenance *with which he* sustained himself.]

The repetition of the elements *-leof - (-lyf -)* and *-lif -* uses paronomasia to demonstrate the connection between sustenance and life,⁸² exceeding parallels in either the corresponding Vercelli translation (XXIII.8–12; though part of the passage may have dropped as a result of eye-skip from the extensive paronomasia) or the Latin *uita*.⁸³ The connection is highlighted further through extensive verbal parallelism with a subsequent passage describing the devils' attempts to coerce Guthlac to fast for seven days. Guthlac's contrary response to the devils repeats this pun in *Vespasian Life* 5.84–8 (and in Vercelli XXIII.81–2): 'þa feng [to þam] medmycclan *bigleofan*, þæt wæs to þam berenan hlafe, and þone bigede and his *lif bile-ofode* ' ('he then took a moderate [amount of] sustenance, which was in the form of barley loaf, and then tasted it and sustained himself'; emphasis mine). While the thematic connection between the two episodes is implicit in the Vercelli version, it is made explicit through verbal parallelism in the *Vespasian Life*.

Elsewhere, however, we find the reverse context: in Vercelli XXIII.92–101, the Vercelli author exhibits his equally expert use of echo-words in order to fashion a mock-blazon (adapted from the Latin) that catalogues the terrifying features of the devils who attack Guthlac (the sections in ***bold italics*** represent major variants in the *Vespasian Life* 5.111–32, while the *simple italics* represent internal echoes):⁸⁴

Wæron hie on [on]syne egeslice, 7 hæfdon [micle] heafdu 7 lange sweoran 7 mæ[ge]re onsyne. Wæron fulice 7 orfyrme on heora bearde, 7 hæfdon ruge earan 7 woh neb, **egeslice** eagan 7 **ondrysenlice** muðas, 7 heora teð wæron horses tuxum gelice, 7 him wæron þa **hracan** lige afylled, 7 hie wæron **ondrysenlice** on stefne. 7 hie hæfdon wo sceancan 7 micle cneowo 7 hindan greate 7 misscrence tan, 7 **hashrymedon on heora cleopunge**, 7 hie swa ungemetlice **hrymdon** 7 foran mid **forhtlicum egesum** 7 **ungeþwærnessum** þæt hit þuhte þæt hit eall betweoh heofone 7 eorðan hleoðrode þam **egeslicum stefnum**.

[They were terrible in countenance, and they had (great) heads and long necks, and thin countenances. They were foul and filthy in their beards, and they had rough ears, and crooked noses, **terrible** eyes, and **dreadful** mouths, and their teeth were like the teeth of a horse, and their **throats** were filled with fire, and they were **dreadful** in voice. And they had crooked shanks, and great knees, and great hind-parts, and deformed toes, **and they cried out hoarsely in their calling**, and they so immoderately **cried out**, and they went with **fearful terror** and **discord**, so that it seemed that it all resounded between heaven and earth with those terrible voices.]

Comparison with the Latin (VSG 102.6–14) reveals the extent to which the vernacular authors add adjectives that increase terror, highlighting in particular the foulness and sound of the creatures:[85](#)

Erant enim aspectu truces, forma terribiles, capitibus magnis, collis longis, macilenta facie, lurido uultu, squalida barba, auribus hispidis, fronte torua, trucibus oculis, ore foetido, dentibus equineis, gutture flammiumo, faucibus tortis, labro lato, uocibus horrisonis, comis obustis, buccula crassa, pectore arduo, femoribus scabris, genibus nodatis, cruribus uncis, talo tumido, plantis auersis, ore patulo, clamoribus raucisonis.

[They were fierce in appearance, terrifying in shape, with huge heads, long necks, thin faces, wan countenances, bristling beards, hairy ears, grim foreheads, fierce eyes, stinking mouths, horses' teeth, flame-belching throats, twisted jaws, fat lips, horrible-sounding voices, charred hair, flabby cheeks, towering chests, scabby thighs, knobby knees, crooked shins, swelling ankles, backwards feet, flapping mouths, and hoarse yowls].

While there is considerable verbal play in both vernacular versions, the repetition in Vercelli XXIII is in this case more extensive and well crafted. For example, the double occurrence of the adjective *ondrysenlice* ('dreadful') links the description of the dreadful mouths of the devils and of their dreadful speech. In a similar manner, the use of a shared root in the hapax legomenon *hashrymedon* ('cried out hoarsely') and in the verb *hrymdon* ('cried

out') helps to create uniformity that emphasizes the monotony of the relentless attacks made by the devils.⁸⁶ The passage as a whole is likewise yoked together by the four-fold occurrence of the adjective *ege* -, effecting alliteration in the phrase *egeslice eagan* ('terrible eyes') where there is none in the variant *reðelice eagan* ('cruel eyes'; 5.118) contained in the *Vespasian Life*. While the substitution of *stefnum* ('with voices'; 5.127) in the *Vespasian Life* creates a better internal echo with the other occurrences of *stefn* - in the passage (5.123 and 133), the use of the word *cleopung* in Vercelli XXIII.98 produces further echoes with a subsequent passage in XXIII.131–2 (and *Vespasian* 5.209–11) in which the devils are said to have 'clypedon ... micelre clypunge' ('called out with great calling') in their descent into hell. Other sound repetitions are evident in both versions, for example in the non-etymological paronomasia created by *hæfdon* ... *heafdu* ('had ... heads'). One also notes the use of a second (apparent) nonce form in the adjective *miscrence* ('deformed,' or perhaps 'horribly shrivelled'), represented in the *Vespasian Life* as *microcet* as a means of describing the ugly demeanour of the devils.⁸⁷ Such effects show clear attempts at artistry on the part of both authors.

Since Vercelli XXIII presents both a fragment and excerpt of Felix's *uita*, it may be expected that the treatment of themes in this text would appear correspondingly partial and derivative. But while the text is faithful to its ultimate Latin source in its overall structure and design, its development of themes adapted and adopted from its antecedent text proves to be remarkably cohesive. Part of the 'glue' that binds the Vercelli narrative together is its continual opposition of the trajectories of 'movement' and 'stasis,' which represent both the physical push and pull of the devils who try to move the defiant Guthlac from his *ancersetl* as well as the mental turbulence expressed by the plotting devils (whose thoughts and bodies are shown to be 'twisted') and by Guthlac himself (as he struggles with temptation). This double reading of stasis and mobility, expressed as both an external and internal struggle, has been copiously explained and often allegorized by scholars, especially in relation to the Exeter Book *Guthlac* poems, though never, it seems, in relation to the Vercelli text. Though there is not room here to rehearse the extensive critical history that lies behind this idea, a few key examples will provide ample context for the examination

of this theme in Vercelli XXIII. In an important study of *Guthlac A*, Thomas D. Hill notes a tension between ‘stability,’ which he aligns with ‘eremitic spirituality,’ and ‘instability,’ taking these references as being representative of the flux of life as experienced outside of anchoritic living. As he notes: ‘*Stabilitas* is in fact a characteristic monastic virtue, one which Guthlac exemplifies in his rigorous refusal to move despite the assaults of supernatural foes.’⁸⁸ For Hill, the upward and downward movement of the devils as they physically drag Guthlac up over the roofs of the monasteries and down to the gates of hell mirrors in its polar movement the extremes of asceticism to which the devils attempt to push Guthlac as they tempt him to sin. These polarities highlight the better alternative of a ‘middle way’ of life that eschews behavioural extremes, such as excessive fasting, which the poem views as a reflex of pride.⁸⁹ Christopher A. Jones, though agreeing in the main with Hill’s assessment, adds the qualification that while in *Guthlac A* the stability of the saint’s body is valorized, this *stabilitas* is juxtaposed against the needful movement of the blessed soul as it travels towards the ultimate fixity of heavenly living: ‘Contrary to human reason, it is not Guthlac’s life on the *beorg*, but rather his being forced to leave it which the poet calls an “exile” ... Once back at his dwelling, Guthlac can enjoy the foretaste of and await the summons to everlasting stability. The migration of the holy men’s souls, far from their violating *stabilitas*, brings that vow to its eternal fulfillment.’⁹⁰ According to Jones, the stasis and movement of Guthlac himself can more productively be read in the context of the ‘prologue’ to *Guthlac A*, which describes the future rewards for the blessed soul as it prepares to journey towards its heavenly homestead. In shifting the focus away from the wholly negative treatment of ‘movement’ in the poem, Jones also departs from what has become the conventional interpretation of Guthlac’s earthly stability as being reflective chiefly of the ascetic life, modelled on the Antonine paradigm of Felix’s Guthlac. As he further points out, the poem’s preoccupation with the corruptions of monastic life predictably emerges from the rewriting of the Guthlac narrative in an environment that is (the complexities of dating aside) arguably more closely aligned with the ethos of the Benedictine reform than with the desert asceticism modelled in Felix’s *uita*. The Guthlac of this poem is thus depicted as being

posed somewhere between two ideologies.⁹¹

Such treatments of *Guthlac A* present a helpful backdrop against which to compare the use of parallel themes in Vercelli XXIII, particularly where metaphors of space and motion are used as a means of allegorizing the spiritual integrity of Guthlac as he moves from a position of physical and mental vulnerability to one of *stabilitas*. Though Vercelli XXIII does not contain the same obvious signposts that serve in *Guthlac A* to insinuate monastic ideals, the text's emphasis upon the 'middle way' of religious living nevertheless becomes a constant thread that permeates the text.

From the outset of Vercelli XXIII, the devils who attack Guthlac are described in relation to the space they occupy and dominate. This much is clear from the introduction of the fiends in XXIII.15–17, where the devil himself is compared to a roaring lion (variations from the source are highlighted in ***bold italics***):

þa se ealda feond mancynnes ***gengde geond þæt græswang*** swa grymetende
leo, þæt he his costunga attor wide ***geondstregde***.⁹²

[Then the old fiend of mankind ***went throughout the grassy plain*** just as a roaring lion, so that he ***scattered*** wide the poison of his temptations.]

The figure is based closely upon the description provided by Felix in (VSG 94/22–4):

tunc antiquus hostis prolis humanae, ceu leo rugiens, per uasti aetheris
spatia tetra numina commutans nouas artes nouo pectore uersat.

[Then the ancient enemy of the human race, like a lion roaring, through the vast spaces of the limitless sky, ever varying his foul demonic might, turns over anew in his chest brand-new arts.]

In both the Old English and Latin texts, the simile of the roaring lion serves well to mirror the interior cunning of the devil as he 'spins' out his evil. But there are also subtle rhetorical differences between these passages. The Vercelli author substitutes the phrase 'gengde geond þæt græswang' ('went throughout the grassy plain'; Vercelli XXIII.15–16) for the Latin 'per uasti aetheris spatia,' relocating the devil's domain to the earth. The substitution is notable for several reasons, not the least of which

is that the Vercelli version renders the comparison as a decidedly earth-bound simile. While Colgrave traces the figure in the *uita* to 1 Peter 5:8, which states, ‘sobrii estote uigilate quia aduersarius uester diabolus tamquam leo rugiens circuit quaerens quem deuoret’ (‘be sober and watch: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour’; trans. Douay-Rheims), the vernacular author, apparently recognizing this biblical debt, seems to have spliced in a reading from Proverbs 28:15, which states that ‘sicut fremitus leonis ita et regis ira et sicut ros super herbam ita hilaritas eius’ (‘as the roaring of a lion, so also is the anger of a king: and his cheerfulness as the dew upon the grass’; trans. Douay-Rheims).⁹³ The vernacular author’s use of the rare poetic compound *græswang* furthermore proves an interesting word choice, as this idiom occurs only two further times in the extant corpus, in Cynewulf’s *Juliana* (to describe the place upon which Maximian was said to kill Christians) and in the ‘Cynewulfian’ *The Phoenix* (to describe the Edenic homestead of the Phoenix). It is tempting to imagine this substitution as an attempt at creating geographical verisimilitude, wherein the *heremus* (‘desert’) of the Latin account is replaced by a grasslands scene, certainly more evocative of an English landscape.⁹⁴ In addition, the use of this ‘poetic’ word complements a series of other rhetorical effects in the vernacular passage, such as the use of sustained sound-play and alliteration linking *gengde* (‘went’) with *geond* (‘throughout’) twice, as well as *græswang* (‘grassy plain’) with *grymetende* (‘roaring’).

This treatment of the devils as encroaching upon Guthlac’s personal space occurs several more times in the Old English and Latin. The most extravagant of these descriptions is that portraying the appearances of the devils as they pour themselves into Guthlac’s hermitage (in Vercelli XXIII.91–2 and VSG 102/6). Since this passage has already been quoted in full, it will suffice here to point out that there is a similar disparity between the description of space in the Latin and Old English. While the *uita* states that the devils ‘spatium totius aeris fuscis nubibus tegebant’ (‘began to cover the space of the whole air with dark clouds’), the Vercelli text omits the particular detail of their darkening the sky, instead concentrating on how the fiends ‘him on ælce healfe inguton, ufan ȝ neoþan ȝ æghwænon’ (‘poured in upon him on

each side, from above and below and everywhere'). It is as though the Vercelli author is attempting to delimit the influence of the devils at this early point in the narrative.

However, the contained movement within Guthlac's hermitage not surprisingly shifts focus as the devils seize Guthlac and lead him through the heavens. In the Latin, this journey is described as follows (VSG 104/2–10; emphasis mine):

Cum autem, post innumerabilia tormentorum genera, post flagellorum ferreorum uerbera, illum inmota mente, robusta fide, in eo quod incoeperat perstare uiderent, horridis alarum stridoribus, *inter nubifera gelidi aeris spatia* illum subuectare coeperunt. Cum ergo ad ardua aeris culmina aduentasset, horrendum dictu! *ecce septentrionalis caeli plaga fuscis atrarum nubium caliginibus nigrescere uidebatur.*

[When after innumerable kinds of torments, after beatings with iron whips, they saw him with an unmoved mind, persevering with robust faith in the endeavour he had undertaken, (then) with the horrible beating of their wings, they began to drag him *through the cloudy spaces of the freezing skies*. When therefore he had reached the high summit of the sky – horrible to say! – *Behold! the region of the northern heavens seemed to grow dark with dark mists and black clouds.*]

The description of the devils as they move 'inter nubifera gelidi aeris spatia' ('through the cloudy spaces of the freezing skies'), darkening the northern region of heaven, clearly recalls the two earlier descriptions in which the devils drag Guthlac 'per uasti aetheris spatia' ('through the spaces of the vast skies') as they cover 'spatium totius aeris fuscis nubibus' ('the whole space of the air with their dark clouds'). However, in this instance, the passage provides not only a tangible description of the devils' growing and shifting dominion, but also an internal register of Guthlac's thoughts and feelings. Though it will be recalled that the hero initially responds to the devils' attacks with confusion (so that 'quo se uerteret, nesciebat'; 'he did not know where he might turn'; VSG 96/12), here, significantly, Guthlac is said to act *inmota mente* ('with an unmoved mind'). Guthlac's positively charged immobility recalls his commitment at the beginning of his solitary retreat to uphold an *inmota ortonomia* ('unmoved rule [of life]'; VSG 94/5), and it is tempting to see this moment of transference as the crowning moment in which Guthlac thoroughly internalizes the severity of the outer rule to which he

initially applies himself. Indeed, by the end of the battle sequence, even when faced with threats of hell-fire, Guthlac reacts with ‘inmotis sensibus, stabili animo, sobria mente’ (‘unmoved senses, a stable spirit, a sober mind’; VSG 106/9–10), showing that his spiritual defence (unlike his earthly home) has become impenetrable.

Vercelli XXIII.114–18 translates rather closely the environmental conditions established in the above Latin quotation (emphasis mine):

Þa æfter ðam þa werigan gastas hine genamon ⁊ hine swungon mid isenum swipum. ⁊ þa æfter þam [hie] hine læddon in þam andrysenlicum fiðerum **betuh ða caldan facu þære lyfte**. Þa he ða wæs on þære heannesse þære lyfte up gelæded, þa geseah he **ealne norðdæl heofones swylce he wære þam sweartestum wolcnum afylled swiðra genipa**.

[Then after that, the accursed spirits seized him and swung at him with iron whips. And then after that they led him on their dreadful wings **between the cold spaces of the sky**. When he was led up into the height of the sky, then he saw **all the northern portion of heaven, as if it were filled with the darkest clouds of menacing darkness**.]

Though the Vercelli version does not here mention Guthlac’s *inmota mens*, the same sentiment is conveyed in the preceding portion of text, where Guthlac defiantly exclaims to the devils (in a passage ultimately derived from Psalm 15:8): ‘Dryhten me is on ða swiðran healfe; for ðam ic ne beo oncyrrred’ (‘The Lord is on my right side, therefore I will not be turned’; Vercelli XXIII.112–13), echoing the Latin ‘Dominus a dextris est mihi, ne commouear.’ Here, the Old English *oncyrrred* provocatively hearkens back to Guthlac’s earlier vulnerability while under siege, wherein we are told (as in the Latin) that ‘he sylfa nyste hwider he mid his mode cyrran wolde’ (‘he knew not himself whither he wished to turn with his mind’; Vercelli XXIII. 28–9). Here, Guthlac’s unwillingness to be turned by the devils marks the same general ‘conversion’ implied in the Latin.

The change in Guthlac’s inner state in the above passage seems to be matched by a shift in the description of devils. While the Vercelli author (in pointed contradistinction to the Latin) has to this point contained the influence of the devils to Guthlac’s earthly space, here their menacing influence is extended to

include ‘þa ... facu þære lyfte’ (‘the spaces of the sky’; Vercelli XXIII.116). It is perhaps important that both authors pinpoint the location of the devils within *norðdæl heofones* (‘the northern portion of heaven’; in Latin, *septentrionalis caeli*), since it is traditionally (as in the Old English *Genesis A*) the northern portion of heaven that Lucifer and his hosts attempt to colonize, and also from which they are eternally expelled.⁹⁵ In the vernacular versions, the typology is especially clear, as the devils are shown not only to descend from the heights of the heavens to the doors of hell, but also to have ‘inhruron and feollon’ (‘rushed in and fell’; XXIII.128) between the grim flames. This echo of their ‘fall’ is more pronounced than in the Latin, which states that the devils ran off ‘inter fauillantium uoraginum atras cauernas’ (‘among black caverns of flaming abysses’; VSG 104/22–3).

From this point in the narrative, Guthlac’s staunch immobility is emphasized as he ventures through the ether with the devils. While the dominion of the devils manifestly extends to the far recesses of hell, Guthlac, by contrast, is powerfully depicted as a *voyeur* who remains outside this region, a fact that is highlighted by the seven-fold repetition of the verb (*ge*)*seon* from the time that Guthlac first ascends into the heavens.⁹⁶ Guthlac’s physical exteriority presents an noticeable reversal from the beginning of the narrative, where Guthlac’s *seap* (‘pit’) is ransacked first by men seeking treasure, and later by devils who *inguton* (‘poured [themselves]’; Vercelli XXIII.91) into his domicile. But while Guthlac was initially susceptible to the torments of the devils, his eventual immunity is highlighted by a nonetymologically based pun on the element *-geot* -/ *-giet* - (‘to pour’ and ‘to perceive’): even as the smoking flames and retching sulfur are said to *up geot an* (‘pour up’; Vercelli XXIII.127), Guthlac paradoxically remains *ofer geot ol ealra þæra tintegra* (‘oblivious to all those torments’; Vercelli XXIII.124).⁹⁷ Though this particular non-etymological pun is clearly unique to the Old English, the Latin *uita* plays similarly upon the contrasting ‘movability’ of the devils by linking hell itself, which is described as having *nefandas ... fauces* (‘dreadful jaws’; VSG 104/14), with the inhabiting devils who themselves possess *faucibus tortis* (‘twisted jaws’; VSG 102/11), wherein both entities are cavernous and permeable.

Eventually, it is this *instabilitas* that governs the downfall of the

devils and the breakdown of their sovereignty. In both the Latin and Old English accounts, it is not until Bartholomew's arrival that the profound darkness cast by the devils is dissipated. This much is made clear in Vercelli XXIII.143–7, where we find the following description of the apostle:

þa semninga com se heofones biggenga, se haliga apostol sanctus
Bartholomeus, mid heofonlicre beorhtnesse 7 wuldre scinende betuh þa
dimman þystro þære sweartan helle. Hie ða, þa werigan gastas, ne meahton
[for þ]ære fægernesse þæs haligan cuman þær *gewunigean*, ac hie sylfe in
heolstre hyddon.

[Then suddenly there came the inhabitant of heaven, the Holy Apostle St Bartholomew, with heavenly brightness and shining glory amidst the dim darkness of that swarthy hell. Then they, the accursed spirits, were not able on account of the fairness of that holy visitor *to remain* there, but they hid themselves in *darkness*.]

Bartholomew, travelling from the upper regions of heaven to the swarthy hell penetrates the darkness of that recess, bringing with him a heavenly light that forces the devils to retreat back into their respective spaces. Bartholomew's unique force is reflected in his depiction as a *biggenga*, which (as Sharma points out in his study of *Guthlac A*) means variously an 'inhabitant, cultivator, worshipper, or benefactor,'⁹⁸ since as an emissary of God, his role is here both colonizing and cultivating. The effect Bartholomew has on Guthlac is substantial, as we are told (in Vercelli XXIII.147–9) that 'þa [h]e ða, se eadiga wer, his þone getrywan freond geseah, ða wæs he mid gastlicre gefeannesse 7 on heofoncundre blisse swiðe gefeonde' ('when he, the blessed man, saw his true friend, then he was greatly rejoicing with spiritual joy and in heavenly bliss').⁹⁹ Verbal reminiscences of an earlier passage in the Vercelli narrative reveals an important change in Guthlac's character: the first time Bartholomew approaches Guthlac, with an [*en*]gelicre fægernesse ('angel-like fairness'; Vercelli XXIII.36), he comes as a 'comfort' (*fultum* ; Vercelli XXIII.34) in order to 'bolster' and 'strengthen' Guthlac (*trym[ian]* and *strang[ian]* ; XXIII.40 and 41). In this later example, however, Bartholomew comes to Guthlac in the capacity of a *getrywa-freond*- ('true friend'; Vercelli XXIII.43 and 148). Guthlac is here no longer in need of comfort, as can be seen from his own response to the *þystra bearnum* ('children of darkness'; Vercelli

XXIII.137) and the *forwyrde tudd[re]* ('offspring of destruction'; XXIII.137): 'Hwæt, ic eom her andweard and earo, and bide mines dryhtnes willan. For hwan [sceolon ge] mid eowrum leasum beotungum me bregean?' ('Indeed, I am here present and ready, and await the will of my Lord; why must you frighten me with your false boasts?'; XXIII.139–41). As a messenger of God's will, Bartholomew serves in this particular guise merely to clear the space for Guthlac's journey to heaven, a state that Guthlac has already achieved in mind. Guthlac's readiness for that journey appears to be highlighted by the unique homiletic ending (cited above) that promotes Guthlac immediately to heaven without hiatus or intervening death. This conclusion, unprecedented in any other surviving Latin or vernacular account, fittingly reflects the insistent spatial paradigm established by the narrative, so that just as the devils instantly infiltrate the *seap* without interference, Guthlac makes moves similarly without hindrance into heaven. The ending likewise fittingly endows Guthlac with his deserved 'battle-reward,' or *guð lac*, as the stated etymology of his name would suggest (adapted from the Latin *belli munus* ; 'gift of battle').¹⁰⁰

This 'homiletic' ending of Vercelli XXIII has proved particularly perplexing to scholars who have sought parallels in the extant source material. Yet perhaps the scope of this search has not been wide enough: although *Guthlac A* has been shown to contain parallels with apocryphal material such as the *Visio sancti Pauli* and the legend of Furseus, as well as with literature containing the soul's dialogue with the body, such possibilities have not been systematically entertained with regard to Vercelli XXIII.¹⁰¹ It may be seen in the Vercelli text, however, that Guthlac's travels to heaven and hell, as well as his instantaneous entrance to heaven, are likely to have been influenced by the same visionary tradition. As Jane Roberts notes: 'The interest of the homilist in this portion of the life may be compared with the attitude of the author of *Guthlac A* to his subject, for both are interested in those aspects of the legend in which Guthlac has more in common with the Fursey-Drihtelm tradition than with the Antonian.'¹⁰² But just how close the depiction is to this large corpus of soul-and-body material remains to be seen.

In chapter 5, Vercelli IV and XXII were shown to contain

variations of the soul's address to the body. While Vercelli IV narrates the fate and fortune of both the wicked and blessed soul (with an obvious debt to a host of Latin and vernacular texts), Vercelli XXII, although largely based on Isidore's *Synonyma*, was likewise shown to be linked to the same general corpus of soul-and-body literature in its treatment of the wicked soul. In Vercelli XXIII, apart from the 'homiletic' ending, still further associations can perhaps be made between the scenes in which Guthlac is 'bound' and 'led out' by the devils who torture him while he is alive, and that of the body in Vercelli XXII.48–9 before it is separated from the soul.¹⁰³ The relevant passage from Vercelli XXIII.102–11 (quoted in full above), bears the following description of Guthlac (emphasis mine):

... hie ða sona þone halgan wer *eallum limum gebundenum hine tugin* 7 *læddon ut of ðære cytan*, ond hie hine on þæt swearte fenn *læddon*, 7 *hine on þa horwihtan wæter wurpon* 7 *besencton* ... Mid þy hie ða lange on þære þystran nihte hine swa *læddon* 7 *swencton*, þa leton hie hine bidan ana 7 gestandan. Heton hine þa þæt he of ðam westene gewite, oððe gif he þæt nolde, þæt hie [hine] woldon *mid maran brogan bysmrgan* 7 *wæcan*.

[... they then *immediately seized and led* the holy man *with all his limbs bound out of that small chamber*. And they *led him into* that dark fen *and they cast him into the filthy water and submerged him* ... As soon as they for a long time in the dark night so *led and afflicted him*, then they allowed him to wait and to stand alone; they commanded him then that he should depart from that desert; or if he wished not to do so, that they would *with greater terror ill treat and afflict him*.]

The leading out of Guthlac's body from his *cytan* ('small chamber') is similar to the description of the devils who lead the 'wicked soul' out of the chamber of its *lichaman* ('body') in XXII.37–46 (discussed in [chapter 5](#) above):¹⁰⁴

Eawla, þæt sio sawl [hiofeð þonne] hio *of ðam lichoman anumen bið*. Ealle hie hie *swa wundige hyrwað*, 7 swa *fule stincende* hie hie *onscuniað*, 7 swa hreofe hie *hie ascufað*, 7 *se lichoma lið on eorðan isne genearwod* 7 *mid racentu[m] geðryd* 7 *mid bendum gebunden* 7 *mid fetrum gefæstnod*, 7 þære synfullan sawle ne beoð þa tintrego gelytlode. Ac þa cwelleras unoflinnedlice cwelmað, 7 hie unaseccgendlice gnornunge hire wite mænað, for þan þe ða deoflu, swa hwæt swa hie magon wælhreowlices hie þencaþ be hire 7 doð. 7 þusendfealdum *witum hie hie tintregiað* 7 *slitað*, 7 se lichoma on eorðan *fulnessum tofloweð* þe we ær mid wistum feddon.

[Alas, that the soul (will lament when) she *is seized from the body*. They all

ill treat her as wounded, and they shun her as foully stinking, and they drive her out as leprous; and the body lies in the earth confined with iron and repressed with chains, and bound with restraints, and fastened with fetters, and the tortures will not be lessened for the sinful soul. But the killers will kill unceasingly, and she will lament her torment with unspeakable lamentation, because the devils, in whatsoever manner they are able, will devise a cruel act and do it. And with a thousand-fold tortures *they will torture and injure her*, and the body, which we earlier fed with feasts, will *flow away in foulness* in the earth.]

Though within the corpus of soul-and-body literature, this description of the binding of the body with shackles is unique to Vercelli XXII (and the relevant passages in the *Synonyma*), it finds an interesting parallel in the treatment of Guthlac, who is similarly bound and tortured after he is led out. For example, while the devils in the Guthlac narrative threaten to *bysmrigan* and *wæcan* ('ill-treat' and 'afflict') him in Vercelli XXIII, the devils in Vercelli XXII are similarly shown to *wundi[an]* and *onscun[an]* ('wound' and 'shun') the soul, inflicting both humiliation and torture upon it. Likewise, although it is clearly a commonplace in soul-and-body literature for the corpse to suffer a *sparagmos*, or a ritual rending apart of its members upon death (as we have seen most graphically in the depiction of the worm *gifer* and his squadron who dismember the wicked body (*Soul and Body I*), in Vercelli XXII, however, the still-living body uniquely faces torture by the troop of devils. That Guthlac himself is submitted to something of a *sparagmos* as his body is dragged 'betuh þa piccan gewridu þara brymela, þæt eal se lichoma wæs gewundod' ('between the thick branches of the brambles, so that his body was entirely wounded'; Vercelli XXIII.106–7), so depicting him in a hauntingly similar light. But while Guthlac is importantly cast throughout as one of the 'blessed' who will go to heaven, the same is clearly not true of the soul in Vercelli XXII, whose terrible fate results from its wickednesses. It is tempting to imagine that the compiler thought of these connections when he added Vercelli XXIII to the final booklet of the Vercelli codex, separated from Vercelli XXII only by the poem *Elene*. Seen in this light, Guthlac's final journey to heaven in Vercelli XXIII, almost in the capacity of a soul already separated from the body, presents an astonishing complement to Vercelli XXII, and, more importantly, an antidote to the account of the wicked soul as presented in that homily. Following the pattern of *Soul and Body I*, Guthlac lives

out the life of the good soul whose piety ultimately wins it a place in heaven.

If, as has been recently suggested, the Vercelli Book presents a collection for private reading and devotion, it seems entirely fitting that the compilation should end with the depiction of such a pious solitary figure. In its dedicated focus upon Guthlac's solitude, the homily contrast somewhat with *Guthlac A*, where glimpses of Guthlac's monastic past insinuate themselves regularly throughout the narrative, for example, in Guthlac's vision of the corrupt monks who conduct themselves with greed, vanity, and gluttony, and in his speech distancing himself from the folly of youths. As we have already seen, the explanation has been offered that the poet used these moments to redirect attention away from the prototypically Eastern ascetic features associated with the *uita*, and to highlight instead those moments in the narrative where the life of Guthlac seems more in line with the practices of coenobitic living. As Jones further notes:

Guthlac A betrays something of a Benedictine prejudice. In the poem's accommodation of events and images from the saint's life to the trappings and attitudes of the cloister, we witness coenobitic monasticism's devotion to the *idea* of Guthlac the anchorite, while we sense the defensiveness inherent in any justification of one state of life alongside, if not to the exclusion of, another.¹⁰⁵

However, this same 'Benedictine prejudice' can arguably be found in the more subtle undercurrents of Vercelli XXIII, especially in those many passages that seem aggressively geared to undercut extreme measures of fasting and penance generally associated with asceticism.¹⁰⁶ From this perspective, Vercelli XXIII effectively echoes and summarizes the doctrine of temperance witnessed throughout the Vercelli Book, most powerfully in those injunctions against immoderate fasting in Vercelli III and against gluttony in Vercelli IV, VII, and XX. The comparison with Vercelli III is worth highlighting briefly, as it offers the same view of temperate fasting as that presumably espoused by Guthlac's own example in both the Latin and vernacular accounts. As it states in Vercelli III.120–6:

Broðor þa leofestan, swiðe god is þæt fæsten mid ge[met]e. For þam sio
gemetfæstnes is halwendlic, 7 swa hwæt swa bið to swiðe 7 ofer gemet, þæt

bið frecenlic. To witanne is weotodlice þæt þæt fæsten mid godum worcum is Gode swiðe andfenge. For þam þæt is þæt fulfremede fæsten þæt mid ælmessan 7 mid gebedum þone heofon þurhfærð, 7 to þæs heh[s]tan Godes þrymsetle becymeð.

[Dearest brothers, fasting with moderation is very good. Because moderation is salutary, and whatsoever is too great and immoderate, that is dangerous. It is to be known clearly that fasting with good works is very acceptable to God. Because that is the perfect fast; namely, that with almsgiving and with prayers he will pass through heaven and come to the highest glory-throne of God.]

The word *þurhfærð* has been translated variously as ‘traverse’ or ‘cross,’ and, as Scragg has demonstrated, sometimes glosses the Latin *penetrare*.¹⁰⁷ It seems significant that this reward of ‘crossing over’ is precisely the recompense that Guthlac receives for his pious living through fasting (and presumably also prayer).

Furthermore, if Vercelli XXIII fits well in the context of some of the homilies contained in the collection, it should likewise be clear that the sometime depiction of Guthlac as a secular hero sits in the company of those verse saints’ lives also included in the Vercelli collection, whose name etymologies appear to embody similar secular-heroic values: while *Andreas* has been conventionally etymologized from the Greek as ‘manly,’ *Elene* appears to be linked to the Old English word *ellen* (‘valour’).¹⁰⁸ Such suggestions reflect admirably not only on the skilful eye of the compiler, but also on the art of the author, who has so adroitly woven both homiletic and narrative aspects into this short piece. These and other linguistic, thematic, and stylistic connections between Vercelli XXIII and the aforementioned works in the Vercelli collection demonstrate that this atypically structured piece fits into the scheme of the collection as a whole.¹⁰⁹ Just as these verbal and thematic reminiscences tie Vercelli XXIII to others in the collection, the presence of similar techniques within the Vercelli text itself serves to weave a tightly bound whole, which is at once narrative in its connection with the Latin *uita* and homiletic in its various departures from it. Bertram Colgrave, the editor of the Latin *uita*, has aptly stated about the Vercelli version that ‘Old English scholars [who] have neglected this piece ... have hardly done justice to the unusual skill of the translator, or the importance of the piece in the development of translation technique during the Anglo-Saxon

period.’¹¹⁰ Just as Colgrave’s statement celebrates the importance of Vercelli XXIII for its skilful manipulation of the Latin source, the foregoing analysis demonstrates that Anglo-Saxon authors perceived genres to be fluid, and as such to be capable of producing a wide range of rhetorical effects. As a veritable synthesis of so many of the genres seen elsewhere in the collection, Vercelli XXIII then, so far from being the embarrassing add-on it is sometimes perceived to be, can in fact be argued to provide an entirely fitting conclusion to the Vercelli Book as a whole.

8 Conclusion: Rhetorical Models and Modes of Style

One aim of this study has been to examine the style and rhetoric of selected Vercelli homilies at various levels of diction, ranging from specific examples of sound-play, wordplay, and other kinds of repetition within individual texts in the Vercelli Book, to similar kinds of parallels linking texts widely dispersed in the manuscript. Within this framework, the discussion has focused on the potentially dual influence of native poetics and imported rhetorical and stylistic devices. In the case of the latter, ‘foreign’ influences have been most fully explored with respect to the incorporation of Latin literary devices, though others have been briefly treated, such as the possible influence of Irish numeric catalogues in Vercelli XXI,¹ and of Greek homiletic sources, particularly as filtered through the Latin translation that inspired Vercelli VII.² In analysing a broad range of elements of style and rhetoric in the Vercelli homilies, the overall approach has been twofold: on the one hand, to offer a consideration of verbal and thematic features adapted and adopted from identifiable Latin and vernacular source-texts and, on the other, to investigate broader stylistic traits that are not easily traceable to a single source, tradition, or genre.

An interesting case indicating both models of influence has been the consecutive analysis of Vercelli X and XXII (in [chapters 4](#) and [5](#) respectively), since these texts draw in markedly different ways upon the same source, namely Isidore’s *Synonyma*.³ It seems that while the author of Vercelli X borrows extensively from select portions of this source (in addition to two other Latin texts), he likewise embellishes his rendering with a wide range of stylistic and rhetorical features drawn from the Latin and vernacular traditions that have not yet been traced to a single source-text. These include such apparently ‘poetic’ features as paronomasia, anaphora, envelope patterning, and embedded lines of poetry, which are nevertheless seamlessly integrated into the fabric of the homily as a whole. By contrast, Vercelli XXII, drawing on disparate portions of the same Isidorian source, not only radically changes the overall dynamic of the Latin text so that it contains a more ‘Christianized’ message, but also appears

to import a host of vernacular materials, some of which can be traced to identifiable traditions containing the soul's address to the body.⁴ While the overall style of Vercelli XXII is to modern eyes perhaps not as well crafted as that employed in Vercelli X, the homily nevertheless conveys the author's ingenuity when it comes to the synthesis of themes confected from the larger corpus of body-and-soul literature. The evident contrast in style and rhetoric exhibited by the authors of Vercelli X and XXII throws into sharp relief the degree to which these texts, and indeed all extant anonymous Old English homilies, need to be considered as individual, well-crafted responses to the challenges inherent in the adaptation of Latin-derived texts within a literary language that displays its own idiosyncratic style.

A demonstrably different approach is apparent in Vercelli XXIII (analysed in [chapter 7](#)), which offers a relatively close translation of portions of Felix's *Vita sancti Guthlaci*.⁵ Detailed comparison with a second surviving Old English translation of the *Vita* suggests that even this narrative-driven text incorporates features that may broadly be categorized as homiletic. In addition to appending a homiletic ending that differs drastically from that contained in any of the other surviving (Latin or vernacular) accounts of this saint's life, the author also includes 'homiletic doublets,' which infuse the text with generically specific idioms. Furthermore, the 'religious' themes in Vercelli XXIII are thrown farther into relief by their comparison with other texts in the Vercelli Book. Especially productive in this respect is the comparison of Vercelli XXIII with Vercelli XXII, which contains a scene of corporeal torture that parallels the scene of affliction experienced by St Guthlac. Vercelli III also contains a discussion of moderate fasting that arguably illuminates issues of temperance in the Guthlac homily. This chapter therefore pushes the sometimes overlooked importance of manuscript context as a source of richly contextualizing detail.

Yet, even when the influences behind elements of style and rhetoric are less clearly defined or attributable to a single source or tradition, a similar set of criteria arguably applies. Such is clearly the case with respect to Vercelli XXI (explored in [chapter 3](#)), which, although cobbled together from a host of Carolingian and patristic sources, was nevertheless shown to owe its

meticulously crafted rhetorical structure to its individual compiler alone. The author's incorporation of so many antithetical catalogues from such a variety of sources, including a Judgment Day segment (for which no source has yet been discovered) that is repeated almost verbatim in Vercelli II, demonstrates precisely its symmetrical arrangement.⁶ As we have seen, the homily also notably includes several embedded lines of poetry that are more difficult to situate, but that share many parallels with a range of extant Old English verse. Such a confection of catalogues and 'poetic' sequences in the homily arguably reflects the larger schema of the Vercelli Book as a whole, where the poetic and prosaic texts are intercalated with no apparent distinction.

Despite the obvious importance of finding and discussing sources (both within this study and in the wider field of Anglo-Saxon studies) as a means of gauging the complex interplay between the traditional and the original in the vernacular literature of Anglo-Saxon England, it has likewise been asserted throughout this study that the identification of sources is not always a reliable measure of style or rhetoric in and of itself: it guarantees neither the extent nor the quality of stylistic or rhetorical 'ornamentation.' This problem of origins is perhaps most clearly explored in [chapter 6](#), which surveys examples of figurative language used in all the homilies in the Vercelli Book, since so few of the identified figures have been traced confidently to Latin or biblical sources. Rather, these similes and metaphors seem particularly apt to be drawn from memory, or by means of free association, sometimes resulting in their imperfect recording in any one manuscript witness.

Although the discovery of sources (both Latin and vernacular) will undoubtedly continue to illuminate both the sources and forms of style and rhetoric employed in the Vercelli homilies, other concerns surely remain similarly paramount. While this study has considered in some detail the influence of what might loosely be termed 'poetic' stylistics on homiletic discourse, the direction of influence is clearly mutual. As discussed above, the general influence of Latin on poetry has been relatively well documented in terms of content and source study: poems outside the Vercelli Book, such as *Christ II* and *Judgment Day II* have been

seen both to be influenced by Latin homiletic sources and to contain connections by way of these sources to surviving Old English homilies.⁷ Similar homiletic connections have also been detected in poems less explicitly and obviously connected to Christian themes, such as *Beowulf*, *The Wanderer*, and *The Seafarer*, as discussed above.⁸

By and large, however, the influence of vernacular homilies on poetry at the level of lexis and style has not been systematically treated. Part of the reason has undoubtedly been the absence of a widely applied homiletic stylistics both within and outside the homiletic corpus. While poems like *Elene* and *Andreas* in the Vercelli Book have attracted some attention in this respect, more precise examination of lexical features is perhaps in order. To highlight only a single episode in *Andreas*, it is clear that such rhetoric pervades the entire exchange between Andreas and Christ on the ship to Mermedonia (lines 235–822). In this episode, Christ, disguised as a steersman, provokes Andreas to explain to him the miracles he (Christ) has performed on earth. The entire scene functions as a training ground upon which Andreas the Apostle learns to preach and proselytize with appropriate register and style. Indeed, Andreas in this respect appears merely to be fulfilling God’s commandment: ‘*bodiað æfter burgum beorhtne geleafan/ ofer foldan fæðm*’ (‘preach the bright faith through the cities over the bosom of the earth’; lines 335–6a).⁹ As such, the exchange between Christ, posing as an unschooled lay person, and Andreas as a skilled preacher, is marked by a series of vocatives using the superlative form of *leof* -, a marker that, as we have seen frequently, signals ‘homiletic’ discourse.¹⁰ Vocatives that include the superlative *leofesta* may be found within this episode at lines 288a (*þeoden leofesta* ; ‘dearest lord’), 307b (*wine leofesta* ; ‘dearest friend’), 575a (*gumena leofost* ; ‘dearest of men’); 595b (*hyse leofesta* ; ‘dearest young man’), 629b (*frea leofesta* ; ‘dearest lord’), and 811b (*hyse leofesta*), each of these uttered either by Andreas or by Christ. Only two examples in this form occur outside this exchange, at 1352b, where the devils attack Andreas, and in 1431b, where God speaks in praise to Andreas. While the superlative form itself occurs some thirty times in the surviving poetic corpus, the clustering of examples in this portion of *Andreas* seems particularly noteworthy. Indeed, the superlative form does not appear in

parallel passages contained in the Apocryphal Acts of Andrew: while Andreas is described in the third person as *beatus Andreas* ('blessed Andreas'), other positive terms such as *frater* ('brother') or *filiolus me* ('my son') are used in direct address between Christ and the saint. Though these vocatives demonstrably suit a Latin preaching context, the superlative *leofesta* (as we have seen) is far more common in the anonymous homilies.¹¹ In the context of Andreas's sermon on the ship, then, it seems inescapable to conclude that such elements of lexis were adjusted in the Old English poem the better to suit this rhetorical framework.

What this brief survey of homiletic idioms in *Andreas* is intended to offer is a directive for expanding the scope of study from an examination of obviously 'homiletic' poems such as *Soul and Body I* and *II* and *Homiletic Fragment I* and *II*, to one that would be more inclusive of poems not explicitly affiliated with this genre. Within the Vercelli Book poems themselves, it is surely striking that the poems anthologized in this collection uniquely share a series of closely related formulas containing a recognizable homiletic address, which can be extracted as follows (bold italics indicate shared parallels):¹²

<i>Andreas</i> , 595	<i>Nu ðu miht gebyran, byse leofesta,</i>
<i>Andreas</i> , 811	<i>Nu ðu miht gebyran, byse leofesta,</i>
<i>Dream of the Rood</i> , 78	<i>Nu ðu miht gebyran, bæleð min se leofa,</i>
<i>Dream of the Rood</i> , 95	<i>Nu ic þe hate, bæleð min se leofa,</i>
<i>Elene</i> , 511	<i>Nu ðu meabt gebyran, bæleð min se leofa,</i>

These moments of address and exhortation in all three poems arguably precede what look like examples of embedded sermons: the two examples in *Andreas* appear as Andreas paradoxically exhorts Christ himself to go forth and tell of his own wonders; those in *Dream of the Rood* as the cross relates his share in Christ's passion, and as he exhorts the Dreamer to take up the apostolic mission and become a preacher himself; and in *Elene* as Judas (still unconverted) use this homiletic language to quote his own father telling him about the crucifixion. The clustering of these distinctive tags in these Vercelli poems seems to signify one of two scenarios: either the compiler chose these poems for their similitudes, or we can yet again detect the editorial hand of the scribe (or perhaps compiler) who inserted these phrases uniformly across these texts. In any case, the attestation of these

phrases in the poems themselves seems to indicate that preaching was a subject pervasively on the mind of the compiler.

More work on the homiletic influences within the Vercelli poems, and indeed within the wider Old English poetic corpus has surely yet to be conducted. For the moment, what this permeability of theme and structure suggests is that if we are to seek to establish or resurrect aesthetic criteria for gauging elements of style and rhetoric in the homilies, the most suitable terms have not always been found through perceptions of diversity from other genres. And if the poetry of (for example) *Homiletic Fragment I* or *Soul and Body I* has seemed to some pedestrian (not to say prosaic), this study has aimed to show that equally at times in its style and rhetoric the so-called prose of the Vercelli homilies can truly soar to the heights of verse.

Moving outwards from the specific interests of this study, the book has also gestured more widely at the place of the Vercelli Book in the wider history of medieval English preaching and homiletics. In [chapter 2](#), the view of the Vercelli as a ‘summary’ of available preaching styles was investigated, drawing especially upon the important work of Paul E. Szarmach. While it has so often been argued that the homilies of Ælfric and Wulfstan mark the culmination of style in the context of Anglo-Saxon preaching, the recent efforts of scholars such as Donald G. Scragg, Paul E. Szarmach, Charles D. Wright, and Mary Clayton have urged us to consider more deeply the rich anonymous corpus of Old English homilies that preceded these wider known works.¹³ But the increased recognition of the place of anonymous homilies within an Anglo-Saxon preaching context has not translated to a wider appreciation of the significant role that homilies of this period in general play in the history of English preaching. This view is encapsulated in statements, such as the following, which summarizes the history of the medieval sermon: ‘The history of medieval preaching may be seen as the transition from the simple patristic homily to the more complex sermon of the high and later Middle Ages. A simple style characterized early medieval preaching (especially monastic sermons) and influenced the form of sermons into the early twelfth century.’¹⁴ Occluded here seems to be any account of those widely variegated styles that permeated Anglo-Saxon preaching. Even in those few discussions

where Anglo-Saxon texts are treated, the focus remains strongly on the adaptation of sources in individual texts and collections (especially in the context of the homilies of Ælfric and Wulfstan), rather than on points of style or rhetoric. It is for most generalist scholars of medieval sermons as if the Anglo-Saxon period had never existed.

But the Vercelli Book, and its rich compendium of styles, reminds us that such preaching was alive and well in the tenth century, and that such was the impression of those writing even on the other side of 1066. This book began with the Venerable Bede's account of the conversion of King Edwin, who, as we are told, was swayed to embrace Christianity by a member of his (presumably pagan) *witan* appropriating the elevated rhetoric of a Christian sermon. We now return to Bede, who continued to be viewed by those writing after the conquest as the father of religious instruction in English. As explained previously, Bede was responsible for igniting a tradition that was perceived by these same medieval writers to have continued without breach right through the Anglo-Saxon period. Such, anyway, was the view of the author of the alliterative poem known as the *First Worcester Fragment*, sometimes titled *Sicut Oves absque Pastore* ('Like sheep without a shepherd,' located in the thirteenth-century manuscript Worcester, Cathedral Library, F. 174, and written by the Tremulous Hand), which contains an impressive list of bishops, all of whom are claimed to have taught (and presumably preached?) in English:¹⁵

[S]anctus Beda was iboren her on Breotene mid us,
 And he wisliche [bec] awende
 þæt þeo Englisc leoden þurh weren ilerde.
 And he þeo c[not]ten unwreih, þe questiuns hotep,
 þa derne di[yogh]elnesse þe deorwurpe is. 5
 Ælfric abbod, þe we Alquin hotep
 he was bocare, and þe [fif] bec wende:
 Genesis, Exodus, Leuiticus, Numerus, Vtronomius.
 þu[rh] þeos weren ilærde ure leoden on Englisc.
 þet weren þeos biscop[es] [þe] bodeden Cristendom, 10
 Wilfrid of Ripum, Iohan of Beoferlai,
 Cūbb[ert] of Dunholme, Oswald of Wireceastre,

Egwin of Heoueshame, Ældh[elm] of Malmesburi,
Swiþþun, Æþelwold, Aidan, Biern of Wincæstre,
[Pau]lin of Rofecæstre, Dunston and Ælfeih of Cantoreburi,

15

þeos læ[rden] ure leodan on Englisc, næs deorc heore liht,
ac hit fæire glod.

[Nu is] þeo leore forleten, and þet folc is forloren.

Nu beoþ oþre leoden þeo læ[rēþ] ure folc,

And feole of þen lorþeines losiaþ and þæt folc forþ mid.

Nu sæiþ [ure] drihten þus, *Sicut aquila prouocat pullos suos*

20

ad uolandum ⁊ *super eo[s uolitat.]*

þis beoþ godes word to worlde asende,

þæt we sceolen fæier feþ [festen to Him].

[Saint Bede was born here in Britain with us,/ And he wisely translated books/ So that the English people were taught by them./ And he unravelled the problems, Called the Quaestiones,/ That obscure enigma which is precious./ Abbot Ælfric, whom we call Alcuin,/ Was a writer and translated the five books:/ Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. / With these our people were taught in English./ There were these bishops who preached the Christian faith,/ Wilfrid of Ripon, John of Beverly,/ Cuthbert of Durham, Oswald of Worcester,/ Ecgwine of Evesham, Aldhelm of Malmesbury,/ Swithun, Ethelwold, Aidan, Birinus of Winchester,/ Paulinus of Rochester, Dunstan and Alphege of Canterbury./ These taught our people in English. Their Light was not dim, but shone brightly. / Now that teaching is forsaken, and the folk are lost./ Now there is another people which teaches our folk,/ And many of our teachers are damned, and our folk with them./ Now our Lord speaks thus, 'As an eagle stirs up her young/ To fly, and hovers over them.'/ This is the word of God sent to the world./ That we shall fix a beautiful faith upon them.]

For several of these figures, the claim for vernacular preaching does not match the surviving textual evidence. For example, although it can be imagined that while Bishop at Sherborne, Aldhelm preached in English as part of his pastoral duties, the only evidence we have for his rhetorical skills (or composition) in the vernacular is William of Malmesbury's wistful anecdote (which he claims to have read in King Alfred's *Handbook*), describing Aldhelm standing on a bridge and singing biblical verse in English, to edify the church-goers as they left mass.¹⁶ Although this fragmentary Worcester list at first reads as a

confused, star-studded cast (where, for example, Ælfric becomes conflated with Alcuin, whose work he translated), as S.K. Brehe has shown, several of these oddities are explicable: some of the bishops are identified not (as we might expect) by association with their sees (as in the examples of Ecgwine, John, Aldhelm, and Wilfrid), but rather by the resting places of their relics; by the same token, the names are roughly catalogued in geographical order beginning with the north of England and finishing in the south.¹⁷ For our purposes, however, what is interesting about the passage is not just its lament for the state of learning and preaching gone awry in England (with its faint echoes of Alfred's similarly pessimistic account in his preface to his rendering of Gregory the Great's *Pastoral Care*),¹⁸ but also the poet's use of macaronic language to emphasize this fact. As Brehe eloquently puts it, 'The cultural rupture suffered by the English under the Normans is illustrated by the linguistic rupture within line 20: the first verse says 'Nu sæiþ ure Drihnten þus.' In the second verse the Lord speaks, but in another tongue.'¹⁹ This effect is highlighted too by its mixture of Germanic alliteration with the 'newer' form of end-rhyme in lines 11–15 (in the pattern *ababa*).²⁰ Beyond nostalgia, the power of the alliterative line as a tool for instruction seems to be at work here.

Whether or not all these bishops preached and taught in the vernacular, the poem nevertheless presents a credible witness to the fact that by the time it was composed, the practice of vernacular preaching was fully regularized, and perceived to have been so for a long while in England. Whether 'converted' or newly generated, the Vercelli homilies remind us that this collection played a significant part, not just in providing a bridge between the age of Bede on the one hand and that of Ælfric and Wulfstan on the other, but as a collection that is deserving of study for its stylistic and rhetorical ingenuity in its own right. The collection furthermore marks a time when it can be said of religious learning and homiletic production in England, at least from the longer vantage point of modern-day scholarship, that 'næs deorc heore liht, ac hit fæire glod' ('their light was not dim, but shone brightly').

Appendices

Appendix 1 The Contents of the Vercelli Homilies and Relevant Variant Texts (as identified by Scragg)¹

Vercelli text [verse texts appear in bold]	Vercelli title [U= untitled]	Variant titles listed in other MSS	Associated fast and feast days [items in brackets are less certain]	Variant texts shown according to Scragg's <i>sigla</i> and abbreviated shelf-marks; asterisks mark homilies that survive only in the Vercelli MS. ²
Hom. I	[acaphalous]	<i>DE PARASCEVE</i> [E]; <i>FR VI IN PARASCEVEN</i> [F]	Good Friday, celebrating the Passion	[E] 134v23–44r13; [F] 174v–86v; [G] 347–65; [H] 61–8 (lines 74 to end); [M] 80r–2v, for Vercelli I.303–50
Hom. II	U	<i>DE DIE IVDICII</i> [N]; and added in [D] in an early modern hand; <i>IN DIE IVDICII</i> [P]	[Judgment Day]	[N] 182–204; [O] 1r–4v; [P] 2r–7v; [X ³] 78–80
Hom. III	U	<i>DOMINICA .II. IN .XL.</i> [E]; <i>DOMINICA .II. IN QUADRAGES- SIMA</i> [F]; <i>Dominica in Quadra- gessime</i> [I]; <i>ITEM ALIA DOCTRINA POPVLI</i> [G]	Second Sunday in Lent	[E] 108r–12r; [F] 132v–37r; [G] 243–52; [I] 56v–58v
Hom. IV	U	U	[Penitential; Soul and Body themes]	[D] 254–80; [F ³] p. 25, for Vercelli IV. 275–323 only; [O] 73r4–80v2 (= Napier XXX), for portions of Vercelli IV; ³ [R] 212–13

1 A key to the *sigla* is found on p. 286. This table presents an amalgamation of data presented in *VH*, xviii, and xxiii–xxxvii. Information about variant titles is gathered from Scragg's critical apparatus for each Vercelli homily. The table is presented in this manner to show more accessibly those Vercelli homilies that demonstrate known associations with liturgical feast and fast days.

2 The table provides only the relevant manuscript information; for more complicated stemmas identifying the relationships between the Vercelli homilies and their variant texts, see Scragg's edition for each individual homily.

3 See Scragg's appendix containing the text of Napier XXX (*VH*, 395–403). Scragg highlights which portions of Napier XXX are common to Vercelli IV, X, IX, and XXI.

Hom. V	<i>TO MIDDANWINTRA . OSTENDE NOBIS DOMINE</i>	<i>SERMO IN NATALE DOMINI</i> [EF]	Christmas	[E] 1r–5v; [F] 1r–7r
Andreas	U	—	<i>Poem</i>	*
Fates of the Apostles	U	—	<i>Poem</i>	*
Hom. VI	<i>INCIPIT NARRARE MIRA- CVLA QUE FACTA FVERANT ANTE ADVENTV[M] SALVA- TORIS D[OMI]NI NO[ST]RI IESV CHR[IST]I</i>	—	Christmas	*
Hom. VII	U, except for Roman numeral II	—	[Penitential; exhortation to good living, possibly also in- tended for the second Sunday after Pentecost] ⁴	*
Hom. VIII	U, except for Roman numeral III	<i>DOMINICA .I. POST THEOPHA- NIA DOMINI</i> [F]; <i>DOMINICA .I. POST THEOPHANIA ET QVANDO VOLVERIS</i> [E]	First Sunday after Epiphany	[E] 33r–5v; [F] 43v–7r

4 The intriguing suggestion that the homily may have been intended for use on the second Sunday after Pentecost was made in a personal communication by Professor Jane Roberts.

Hom. IX	U, except for Roman numeral IIII	<i>DOMINICA II POST THEOPHANIA ET QUANDO VOLVERIS</i> (in red) [E]	Second Sunday after Epiphany	[E] 35v–40v; [H] p. 202, for Vercelli IX.144–216; [L] 140r–147r; [M]; see note 5 [N] 70–3 (= Napier XLIII), for Vercelli IX.8–27, 108–13, and 117–18; [O] 73r4–80v2 (= Napier XXX), for Vercelli IX.90–173
Hom. X	U, except for Roman numeral V	[text begins with: <i>to pam oderum gangdage</i> (now erased in [B]): <i>to pam oderum gangdage feria ii in letania maiore</i> [K]; <i>to pam oderum gangdage feria ii in letania maiore larspel</i> [N]	[Tuesday in Rogationtide?; penitential]	[B] 63v–5r, for Vercelli X.9–37 and conclusion only; [C] 2r, for Vercelli X.271–6 only; [I] 164rv, for Vercelli X.200–end only; [J] 27v–31v, for Vercelli X.122–end only; [K] 221–30, and 78–83, for Vercelli X.122–end only; [N] 170–208 (= Napier XLIX); [O] 73r4–80v2 (= Napier XXX), for portions of Vercelli X ⁶
Hom. XI	<i>SPEL TO FORMAN GANGDÆGE</i>	—	Monday in Rogationtide	*
5 Scragg's MS M contains three separate items, which he labels as follows: [M] fols. 86v–8v, containing 'the devil's account of the next world,' for Vercelli IX.122; [M] fol. 87r (= Napier XLIV), containing a version of the 'Sunday letter,' for Vercelli IX.8–27; and [m] fol. 52v, for Vercelli IX.8–20. See <i>VH</i>, 151–7. 6 See note 3 above.				
Hom. XII	<i>SPEL TO ODRUM GANGDÆGE</i>	—	Tuesday in Rogationtide	*
Hom. XIII	<i>SPEL TO PRIDDAN GANGDÆGE</i>	—	Wednesday in Rogationtide	*
Hom. XIV	<i>LARSPEL TO SWYLCERE TIDE SWA MAN WILE</i>	—	[To be used as needed]	* (Except for two sentences from [H])
Hom. XV	<i>ALIA OMELIA DE DIE IVDICII</i>	—	[Judgment day]	*
Hom. XVI	<i>OMELIA EPHYFANIA D[O]MI[N]I</i>	—	Epiphany	*
Hom. XVII	<i>DE PURIFICATIONE S[AN]CTE[M] MARIA[E]</i>	—	Purification of Mary	*
Hom. XVIII	<i>DE SANCTO MARTINO CONFESSORE</i>	<i>TO SCE MARTINES MÆSSAN</i> [B]	Life of St Martin, 11 November	[B] 127r–35v; [C] 62r–61r
<i>Soul and Body I</i>	U	U	<i>Poem</i>	[variant text, <i>Soul and Body II</i> is contained in the Exeter Book]
<i>Homiletic Fragment I</i>	U	—	<i>Poem</i>	*
<i>Dream of the Rood</i>	U	—	<i>Poem</i>	*
Hom. XIX	U	<i>FERIA II IN LETANIA MAIORE</i> (in red) [G]; <i>FERIA II SERMO IN LETANIA MAIORE</i> (in red) [H]; <i>DOMINICA ANTE ROGATIONVM</i> (in red) [P]	Monday in Rogationtide	[G] 403–12; [H] 215–19; [P] 44r–55v ⁷
Hom. XX	U	<i>IN TERTIA FERIA IN LETANIA MAIORE</i> (in red) [G]; <i>ALIUS SERMO FERIA III. IN ROGATIONIBVS</i> (in red) [H]	Tuesday in Rogationtide	[G] 412–22; [H] 219–23; [P] Lambeth Palace 50v–1r, for Vercelli XX.197–203 ⁸
Hom. XXI	U	— ⁹	Wednesday in Rogationtide	[O] 73r4–80v2 (= Napier XXX), for portions of Vercelli XXI ¹⁰
Hom. XXII	U	—	[penitential]	*
7 Left out here are two minor variants (in Scragg's [M] and [S]), cited by Scragg only tangentially for Homily XIX (<i>VH</i>, xviii). 8 Omitted here is the variant text witnessed in [Q], cited by Scragg in his table, but not in his critical apparatus for Vercelli XX, since the manuscript has no further connections with the Vercelli Book (<i>VH</i>, xviii). 9 Though the beginning portions of the homily contained in [O] are irrelevant to Vercelli XXI, the text is nevertheless titled <i>BE RIHTAN CRISTENDOME</i>. 10 See note 3 above.				
<i>Elene</i>	U	—	<i>Poem</i>	*
Hom. XXIII	U	—	Life of St Guthlac, 11 April	[Z] 23r–6v (the OE life of St Guthlac; the shorter Vercelli XXIII shares only a portion in common with a related version)

Scragg

MS

sigla	Manuscript	Ker no.	Date
A	Vercelli, Biblioteca Capitolare, CXVII	394	s. x ²
B	Princeton University Library, W.H. Scheide Collection 71	382	s. x/xi
C	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 85 and 86	336	s. xi med.
D	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41	32	s. xi ¹ or xi med.
E	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 340 and 342	309	s. xi in.
F	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 198	48	s. xi ¹ , xi ²
G	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 162	38	s. xi in.
H	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 303	57	s. xii ¹
I	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 343	310	s. xii ²
J	British Library, Cotton Faustina A.ix	153	s. xii ¹
K	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 302	56	s. xi/xii
L	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 115, 140–7	332.34	s. xi ²
M	British Library, Cotton Tiberius A.iii, 2–173	186	s. xi med
N	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 419 and 421	68–9	s. xi ¹
O	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 121; Hatton 113 and 114	338 331	s. xi third quarter
P	British Library, Cotton Cleopatra B.xiii; London, Lambeth Palace Library, 489	144 283	s. xi third quarter
Q	Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Lat. 943	364	s. xi in.
R	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 201, pp. 179–272	50	s. xi third quarter
S	Cambridge, University Library, li.1.33	18	s. xii ²
T	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 116	333	s. xii ¹
Z	British Library, Cotton Vespasian D.xxi, 18–40	344	s. xi ²
X ^b	Cambridge, University Library, li.4.6	21	s. xi med.
X ^d	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 201, pp. 1–178, Part B	49	s. xi med.
X ^f	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 115, 148–55	332.35–7	s. xii med. and ex.
f ^a	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 367, Part II, 3–6 and 11–29	63	s. xii
f ⁱ	British Library, Cotton Vitellius A.xv, 4–93	215	s. xii med.

11 This table is taken from *VH*, xvii, with dates added from the information Scragg presents elsewhere in *VH*, xxiii–xxxvii.

Appendix 2 Divisions in the Vercelli Book According to Scragg (by Exemplar) and Sisam (by Quire)

[Note: italics are used to designate points of disagreement between Scragg and Sisam]

Vercelli text	MS folio numbers	Probable division according to exemplar [Scragg]	Possible further groupings according to exemplar [Scragg]	Sisam's arrangement according to quire [Sisam]	Leaves per quire [Sisam]	Ruling by no. of lines [Sisam]
Hom. I	1r–9r (fol. 1 illegible)	Group A	A1	Q1: fols. 1–9	8+1 (fol. 4) ¹	24
Hom. II	9v–12r		A2a	Q2: fols. 10–18	8+1 (fol. 11)	fols. 10 and 11r for 24 lines; the rest for 25 lines
Hom. III	12v–16r	Group B	A2b	Q2: cont.		
Hom. IV	16v–24v		A3	Q2: cont.		
				Q3: fols. 19–24 [wants leaf after fol. 24]	6+1 (fol. 21) ²	24

1 According to Sisam (*Vercelli Book*, 37), the scribe probably used an extra leaf so that he could finish the homily with that addition. The fact that no more leaves are included in this quire may suggest that the text of Vercelli I was prepared as an independent item before its inclusion in the Vercelli Book.

2 Sisam (*Vercelli Book*, 37) argues that when the scribe prepared this abnormal quire, he likely did not intend to add Homily IV (in quire 3), or he would have used two normal quires of eight so that he could have copied the texts continuously, with Homily IV ending exactly at the close of quire 3. Sisam infers that a different text originally followed Homily III, using the other seven leaves of which now remains only the first. Quire 3 is also irregular in its make-up, containing half-sheets for the first and third leaves; Sisam supposes that the first half-sheet once had a matching seventh leaf, which has been excised and which may have contained another text deemed unsuitable for the Vercelli Book.

Hom. V	25r–9r	Group B	B1	Q4: fols. 25–32	8 ³	29
Andreas	29v–52v		B2a	Q4: cont.		
				Q5: fols. 33–40	8	24
				Q6: fols. 41–7 [wants third leaf after fol. 42]	8	24
				Q7: fols. 48–55	8 ⁴	25
				Q7: cont.		
<i>Fates of the Apostles</i>	52v–4r					
Hom. VI	54v–6r		B2b [VII–X are numbered in sequence, and VI has been shown to derive from the exemplar]	Q7: cont.		
				Q8: fols. 56–63 [wants first and tenth leaves before fol. 56 and after fol. 63]	10 ⁵	24

3 The text in this quire is ruled separately at 29 lines per page instead of the usual 24 in quires in Scragg's Group B. Sisam (*Vercelli Book*, 37–8) suggests that like the first quire, this one was probably prepared independently before the scribe (or collector) decided to include it in the Vercelli Book.

4 Quire 7 is ruled for an abnormal 25 lines, presumably in order to make room for the large initial intended at the beginning of *Fates of the Apostles*. The condensed text also allows Cynewulf's signature to appear in full on a single page (see Sisam, *Vercelli Book*, 38).

5 Sisam (*Vercelli Book*, 38) reasons that at the end of quire 7, the scribe must have calculated the space he needed for homilies VI–X (all ostensibly drawn from a single exemplar), by adding an extra sheet to quire 8. This grouping of texts is supported by the fact that Homily X ends on the last leaf of quire 9 and the remainder of the page is blank.

Hom. VII	56v–9r	Group B		Q8: cont.		
Hom. VIII	59r–61r			Q8: cont.		
Hom. IX	61r–5r	Group B		Q8: cont.		
				Q9: fols. 64–71	8	24
Hom. X	65r–71r	Group B		Q9: cont.		
Hom. XI	71v–3v		B2c [XI–XIV are rubricated as a sequence]	Q10: fols. 72–9 [wants fourth leaf after fol. 75]	8+1 ⁶	24
Hom. XII	73v–5v			Q10: cont.		
Hom. XIII	75v–6v			Q10: cont.		
Hom. XIV	76v–80v			Q11: fols. 80–5 [wants fifth and eighth leaves after fols. 83 and 85]	8	24

6 Sisam (*Vercelli Book*, 38) argues that quires 10–14 are planned together, so that quire 12 has only 6 leaves and quire 10 an extra. The codicological evidence supports Scragg's assertion of a single exemplar for Homilies XI–XIV, in so far as Sisam's quires 10 and 11 are concerned. However, Scragg, as indicated in n. 7 below, finds a change in exemplar after Homily XIV.

Hom. XV	80v–5v	B2d [XV–XVIII share headings in black capitals, and are similar linguistically; Scragg posits a Mercian homiliary of unknown date] ⁷	Q11: cont.		
Hom. XVI	85v–90v		Q12: fols. 86–91	6	24
Hom. XVII	90v–4v		Q13: fols. 92–8 [wants seventh leaf after fol. 97]		
Hom. XVIII	94v–101r		Q14: fols. 99–104 [wants third and seventh leaf after fols. 100 and 103]	8	24
<i>Soul and Body I</i>	101v–3v [1 or more pages missing]	B2e	Q14: cont.		
<i>Homiletic Fragment I</i>	104r–4v		Q14: cont.		
<i>Dream of the Rood</i>	104v–6r	B3	Q14: cont.		
			Q15: fols. 105–11	6+1 ⁸	fols. 105–9, for 32 lines; fols. 110–11 for 33 lines
Hom. XIX	106v–9v	B4a [XIX–XXI are the product of a single author or school]	Q15: cont.		
Hom. XX	109v–12r		Q15: cont.	8	
			Q16: fols. 112–18 [wants first leaf before fol. 112]	8	31
Hom. XXI	112r–16v				
Hom. XXII	116v–20v	B4b	Q17: fols. 119–20	2 singletons ⁹	31
<i>Elene</i>	121r–33v	Group C	Q18: fols. 121–8	8 ¹⁰	32
Hom. XXIII	133v–5v		Q19: fols. 129–35 [wants eighth leaf after fol. 135]	8	32

¹⁰ Sisam (*Vercelli Book*, 39–40) argues that quires 18 and 19 were ruled with a larger number of lines per page to follow quires 16 and 17; all have 32 lines per page, except the first, which follows the spacing of quires 16 and 17 at 31 lines per page.

Commentary

In his 1992 edition of the *Vercelli Book*, Donald Scragg made several important revisions (reflected in the table above) to his division of the manuscript according to exemplar, in light of the above evidence provided by Celia Sisam. These revisions, summarized briefly in the postscript to his 1973 article ‘The Compilation of the Vercelli Book,’ are as follows: Scragg now accepts that *The Dream of the Rood* was included separately from the preceding poems, *Soul and Body I* and *Homiletic Fragment I*, as indicated by his separation B3 for the text of *The Dream of the Rood*. Scragg, however, does not accept one of Sisam’s claims:

while Sisam views quires 10–14 as being ‘planned together and written consecutively,’ Scragg argues for a series of minor divisions between the texts contained in this grouping, which are largely dictated by changes in exemplar. In contrast with Sisam, who argues that Homilies XIV and XV (written across a single quire) were copied as a separate unit, Scragg argues that XV forms a group with the following Homilies XV–XVIII, which he posits are derived from a single exemplar on the basis of shared linguistic forms, displaying possibly Mercian origin. The codicological evidence would seem to support Scragg’s claim, since Homilies XV–XVIII contain similar headings in black capitals, and with the same capitalized M (with a suspension), abbreviating the opening *Men*. Scragg has also argued that an erasure of what Sisam characterizes as 10–12 letters at the end of Homily XIV (fol. 80v),¹¹ shows ‘a change in plan,’ taking the erasure as ‘part of the heading for an item subsequently discontinued.’¹² Scragg’s point, however, seems insufficiently substantiated by the manuscript evidence, since at the start of Homily XVI (fol. 85v), we find a similar erasure of about ten letters, written in the same style as the title now recorded there, likewise beginning with *OM* (presumably for *OMELIA*). Unless XVI also originally contained different material, Scragg’s explication of the erasure at the end of Vercelli XIV may be premature.

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1 *Preaching the Converted: The Style and Rhetoric of the Vercelli Book
Homilies*

¹ *HE*, 182–4. Translations of Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History* are modified from *HE*.

2 These quotations are derived from Jane Toswell, 'Bede's Sparrow and the Psalter in Anglo-Saxon England,' *ANQ* 13.1 (2000): 7–12. Toswell also notes the appearance of sparrows in Psalms 10:2 and 123:7, and cites possible further connections with Mt 10:29 and Lk 12:6. In quoting biblical accounts, I use Fischer et al., eds, *Biblia sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1980; repr. 1994), and the Douay-Rheims translation (1582–1609), as revised by Challoner (1749–50; the latest edition appears as *The Holy Bible. Douay Version: Translated from the Latin Vulgate* [London: Catholic Truth Society, 1956]).

- 3 See Tristan Major, '1 Corinthians 15:52 as a Source for the Old English Version of Bede's Simile of the Sparrow,' *N&Q* 54.1 (2007): 11–16. The same biblical quotation, as I point out below, 186, and as Major now treats, appears to be behind Vercelli IV.53, which discusses the sudden change of hell-dwellers into ice: 'on anes eagan byrhtme bið eall hellwarena mægen þurh his anes fnæst geworden to ise' ('in the twinkle of an eye is the entire troop of hell-dwellers changed to ice through his breath alone'). The phrase, if it is linked to 1 Cor 15:52, may have occurred to the homilist as a means of linking changing bodies with Doomsday themes.

- 4 Text of Napier XXX is cited from Scragg, *VH*, 174. Compare also with the variant passage found in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 340 (144r), from which Scragg corrects the imperfect text of Vercelli IX.

- 5 For a discussion of possible sources behind this quotation, see below, 187 and 191 n. 28. Translations of the Vercelli Book homilies are my own, with occasional adaptations from Lewis E. Nicholson, ed., *The Vercelli Book Homilies: Translations from the Anglo-Saxon* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991).

- 6 The understanding of *ostia* as ‘doors’ was clearly understood by the Old English translator, who used *duru* for this construction.

7 *HE*, 167.

8 *HE*, 179; these editors note in the phrase ‘consumed with inward fire’ a Vergilian echo from *Aeneid* 4.2, where this striking phrase refers to Dido’s incipient and helpless love for Aeneas. Just as Bede has his anonymous pagan counsellor borrow the discourse of Christianity, so too Bede was not above using pagan poetic terms to spread the Word.

⁹ See especially the passage on present-day evils in Vercelli XI.86–99, discussed below, 7–8.

10 On the treatment of idolatry in the Vercelli Book, see Vercelli XVIII.154–207 (where St Martin destroys idols); XII.1–11 (which describes idols inhabited by devils); XV.15–19 (which outlines the renewal of pagan idols in the time of the Antichrist) and 113–17 (which predicts the destruction of pagan temples on Judgment Day); and XI.1–8 (which disparages the worship of idols in the context of Christian Rogationtide practices). On the dangers of sorcery and magic, see especially Vercelli IV.44–8 (which describes the torments of sorcerers in hell) and II.72 and the parallel passage in XXI.223 (which warn against *gedwollcræftas*, or ‘magical arts’). For further references to these pagan practices, see Robert Di Napoli, *An Index of Theme and Image to the Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church* (Hockwold cum Wilton: Anglo-Saxon Books, 1995).

- 1 As Paul E. Szarmach, ed., *Vercelli Homilies IX–XXIII*, TOES 5 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), xix, notes: ‘single leaves are missing after fols. 42, 55, 63, 75, 83, 85, 97, 100, 103, and 111, and probably single blank leaves after folios 24 and 135.

- 2 The Vercelli homilies have been edited in whole or in part in the following published editions (in descending chronological order): *VH* ; Szarmach, *Vercelli Homilies* ; Max Förster, *Die Vercelli-Homilien I–VIII*, Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa 12 (Hamburg, 1932; repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964) and also ‘Der Vercelli-Codex CXVII nebst Abdruck einiger altenglischer Homilien der Handschrift,’ in *Festschrift für Lorenz Morsbach*, ed. Ferdinand Holthausen and H. Spies, *Studien zur englischen Philologie* 50 (Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1913), 20–179. Unpublished editions by different authors include Sr M. Corfilia Pinski, ‘Six Unpublished Homilies in the Vercelli Manuscript’ (unpublished PhD diss., University of Ottawa, 1966); Paul Peterson, ‘The Unpublished Homilies of the Old English Vercelli Book’ (unpublished PhD diss., New York University, 1951); Rudolph Willard, ‘The Vercelli Homilies: An Edition of Homilies I, IV, V, VII, VIII, XI and XII’ (unpublished PhD diss., Yale University, 1925). For facsimiles, see Celia Sisam, ed., *The Vercelli Book: A Late Tenth-Century Manuscript Containing Prose and Verse*, EEMF 19 (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1976); and Max Förster, intro., *Il Codice Vercellese con omelie e poesie in lingua anglosassone. Capitolo metropolitano di Vercelli la prima volta interamente riprodotto in fototipia* (Rome: Danesi, 1913).

- 3 *Handlist*, item 640, dates the so-called Junius manuscript (properly styled Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 11 [5123]) to s. xi¹ and places it in the South of England, perhaps in Canterbury Christ Church. Although the Vercelli Book may predate this collection, Canterbury has also been the favoured place of origin for the Vercelli Book (see below, 10–19). On the controversial date of the Junius manuscript see Leslie Lockett, 'An Integrated Re-examination of the Dating of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 11,' *ASE* 31 (2002): 141–73.

- ⁴ In her 1976 facsimile edition, C. Sisam (*Vercelli Book*, 13–31 at 18) provides a detailed description of the manuscript's physical make-up. For further description of the contents, see Ker, *Catalogue*, item 394, and *VH*, xliii.

5 C. Sisam, *Vercelli Book*, 29–30 and 51–60.

- ⁶ Ker, *Catalogue*, item 394. On the physical damage to the manuscript, see also Maureen Halsall, 'Vercelli and the Vercelli Book,' *PMLA* 84 (1969): 1545–50. Corrupting reagent seems to have been applied by C. Maier, on fols. 75v, 77r, 85v, 86rv, and 106v, when he made his transcription of the Vercelli book (see *VH*, xxii). On Maier's important transcription of the Vercelli Book, see *VH*, xxiv.

7 On the omission of capitals, see C. Sisam, *Vercelli Book*, 19.

- 8 For a description of zoomorphic initials, rubricated letters, and drawings (including a sketch of a small dog or lion on folio 49r), see especially C. Sisam, *Vercelli Book*, 17–31. On marginalia, see Kenneth Sisam, ‘Marginalia in the Vercelli Book,’ in his *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953; repr. 1962), 109–18; and Margaret Martin, ‘A Note on the Marginalia in the “Vercelli Book,”’ *N&Q* n.s. 25 (1978): 485–6.

⁹ See below, 33–4, and 42.

10 C. Sisam, *Vercelli Book*, 18.

- 12 On the evidence of writing in the manuscript while it was already in Italy, see below, 21–2. The ‘re-discovery’ of the manuscript in the nineteenth century is always attributed to Friedrich Blume, who published his findings in his *Iter Italicum* 1 (Berlin and Halle, 1824), 99, as cited by C. Sisam, *Vercelli Book*, 15.

13 As we shall see, Donald G. Scragg, the most recent editor of the homilies of the Vercelli Book, has proposed a more compact dating between 959 and 988 (see below 8–9). *Catalogue*, item 394 assigns the date s. x², and *Handlist*, item 941, follows suit. For a brief review of early debates on the issue of dating the manuscript, see Michael Swanton, ed., *The Dream of the Rood* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1987), v.

14 C. Sisam, *Vercelli Book*, 20–3.

- 15 C. Sisam derives this evidence from her father, Kenneth, whom she cites in her *Vercelli Book*, 21 n. 4. For further discussion of these charters, see Matthew Hussey, 'Ascetics and Aesthetics: The Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts of Isidore of Seville's *Synonyma* ' (unpublished PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2005), 370–1.

- 16 Förster, *Il Codice*, 11–14; see *Wulfstan*, 4 for details about Wulfgeat’s manuscript. The date is derived from *Handlist*, item 637.

17 K. Sisam, *Studies*, 109–10 (as cited by Swanton, *Dream*, 2).

- 18 See Elzebieta Temple, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts 900–1066*, Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles 2 (London: Harvey Miller, 1976), who compares sample initials from the Vercelli Book (no. 28) with those of Cambridge, Trinity College, MS o.3.7 (no. 20; pls. 76–8), as cited by Elaine Treharne, ‘The Form and Function of the Vercelli Book,’ in *Text, Image, Interpretation: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature and Its Insular Context in Honour of Éamonn Ó Carragáin*, ed. Alastair Minnis and Jane Roberts (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 253–66 at 255.

- 19 F. Wormald, 'Decorated Initials in English Manuscripts from AD 900 to 1100,' *Archaeologia* 91 (1945): 107–35, at 120 and 134 (as cited by Swanton, *Dream*, 2).

20 C. Sisam, *Vercelli Book*, 36.

21 The designation ‘men þa leofestan’ may refer specifically to ‘men’ or more broadly to ‘people’; the latter is used for inclusivity.

22 As cited by C. Sisam, *Vercelli Book*, 36.

23 Sisam, *ibid.*, in fact proposes a date as late as ‘the first years of the eleventh century, when, as Wulfstan’s “*Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*” shows, reference was still made to the imminent end of the world’; however, this date clearly takes us well beyond the latest date determined palaeographically.

24 *VH*, 220 and xxxviii–xlii. Also see Donald G. Scragg’s ‘The Compilation of the Vercelli Book,’ *ASE* 2 (1973): 189–207; repr. in *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: Basic Readings*, ed. Mary Richards (New York: Garland, 1994), 317–43.

- 25 Charles D. Wright, 'Vercelli Homilies XI–XIII and the Anglo-Saxon Benedictine Reform: Tailored Sources and Implied Audiences,' in *Preacher, Sermon, and Audience in the Middle Ages*, ed. Carolyn Meussig (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 203–27 at 224.

27 Further discussion of the putative audiences for the Vercelli homilies is provided below, 32–42.

28 David N. Dumville, 'English Square Minuscule Script: the Mid-Century Phases,' *ASE* 23 (1994): 133–64. For an additional summary of the palaeographic features of this phase, particularly as they relate to the Vercelli Book, see now Treharne, 254.

29 Dumville, 'English Square Minuscule Script,' 140 n. 39.

30 Treharne, 'Form and Function,' 253, n. 1.

- 31 Ibid., n. 16, citing Mechthild Gretsch, *The Intellectual Foundations of the English Benedictine Reform*, CSASE 25 (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999). It should be noted that Treharne's placement of the Vercelli Book within the Reform period has much to do with her view of the manuscript as a production of St Augustine's, where the great Reformer Dunstan himself was made archbishop in 959 (256 n. 16).

32 On the question of Benedictine influences within the Vercelli Book, see below, 34–5, 205, 256, and 266.

33 C. Sisam, *Vercelli Book*, 44. Sisam's placement of the manuscript in a nunnery has received renewed attention by Mary Dockray-Miller, in 'Female Devotion and the Vercelli Book,' *PQ* 22 (2004): 337–54 (and see below, 38 n. 35 and 40).

34 See especially Scragg, 'Compilation,' 317–43.

37 For a lengthy analysis of these forms, see Scragg, 'Compilation,' 329–43.

38 Scragg, 'Compilation,' 339; see also Mary Clayton, 'Homiliaries and Preaching in Anglo-Saxon England,' *Peritia* 4 (1985), repr. in *Old English Prose : Basic Readings*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach (New York and London: Garland, 2000), 151–98 at 173.

39 See *VH*, xliii–lxxi, where Scragg discusses the degree to which lexical elements in individual homilies are informed by earlier exemplars for the Vercelli Book. Scragg also argues with Celia Sisam’s reading of the kind and nature of corrections and changes made by the Vercelli scribe. He takes particular exception to Sisam’s classification that the scribe was ‘slavish’ to his exemplars, showing that he made mistakes in both the Old English and Latin.

40 *VH*, lxxiv. Sometimes, however, the error was evidently in the copy-text or even perhaps the source rather than introduced by the Vercelli scribe. See, for example, my discussion of the several misconstrued passages common to Vercelli XVII and V in 'Re-reading the Style and Rhetoric of the Vercelli Homilies,' in *Precedence, Practice, and Appropriation: The Old English Homily*, ed. Aaron Kleist (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 173–207.

- ⁴¹ Donald G. Scragg, 'Studies in the Language of Copyists of the Vercelli Homilies,' in *New Readings in the Vercelli Homilies*, ed. Samantha Zacher and Andy Orchard (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, forthcoming).

42 For a partial list of these manuscripts, see Scragg, 'Compilation,' 342. Scragg has since helpfully arranged these and other manuscript witnesses in a table, published in his 'The Corpus of Vernacular Homilies and Prose Saints' Lives before Ælfric,' in *Old English Prose*, ed. Szarmach, 73–150, at 121–8.

43 The fullest treatment remains his introduction to *VH* (xxiii–xxxvii), in which Scragg provides a detailed account of each manuscript containing points of overlap with the Vercelli homilies. In each case, the Vercelli Book provides the earliest extant witness to these texts.

44 Scragg, 'Studies in the Language.' I am grateful to Professor Scragg for allowing me to quote from this article before its publication.

45 The dates for these manuscripts (in the above order) are supplied from *Handlist*, items 569, 64, and 50.

46 Manuscript information is derived from *VH*, xxvii–xxviii.

47 Scragg, 'Compilation,' 342.

48 Whether the unusual copying of *The Dream of the Rood* (as we shall see below, 69–71) has any bearing upon its exclusion from **EFG** has not yet been considered.

49 Scragg, 'Compilation,' 342.

50 For these variants, see *VH*, lxxiv–v.

51 *VH*, lxxvi; abbreviations for the Vercelli Book are expanded from Scragg's *siglum* **A** for the manuscript.

52 As we shall see in [chapter 3](#) (91–2), Scragg has other reasons for favouring Canterbury. In assessing the large repetition of text common to Vercelli II and XXI (excepting dialectic, spelling, and other minor variants), Scragg concludes that this overlapping reveals the haphazard methods of the compiler. Since both Vercelli II and XXI are at a close remove from the same antecedent text, Scragg has speculated that the author of Vercelli XXI (who also almost certainly composed Vercelli XIX and XX) and the compiler of the Vercelli manuscript were working in the same scriptorium. Though the textual evidence clearly supports Scragg's view of the ancestry of these two homilies (both to each other and to the antecedent text), as we shall see in [chapter 3](#), the concurrence of author and compiler is not the inevitable conclusion. It seems just as likely that the substantial textual differences between Vercelli II (an eschatological homily) and XXI (set for the third day of Rogationtide) are large enough to warrant their treatment as separate textual entities within the Vercelli Book; there is simply no need to assume the simultaneous placement of author and compiler.

53 On the various borrowings between Napier XXX and the Vercelli texts outlined above, see Donald G. Scragg, 'Napier's "Wulfstan" Homily XXX: Its Sources, Its Relationship to the Vercelli Book, and Its Style,' *ASE* 6 (1977): 197–211, at 210. Preceding Scragg are several other major assessments of this homily, especially that by Leslie Whitbread, "'Wulfstan" Homilies XXIX, XXX, and Some Related Texts,' *Anglia* 81 (1963): 347–64. Scragg prints a full edition of the homily in his *VH*, 395–403.

54 See Scragg, 'Napier's "Wulfstan" Homily XXX.'

55 Ibid., 211. However, Scragg seems to have changed his mind on the subject in his edition, where he proposes that rather than the scribe having had access to a full anthology containing these materials, the homilist of Napier XXX 'was composed by someone with access to the range of exemplars used in the compilation of [the Vercelli Book], two scribes, in other words, using the same library of homiletic materials,' though he does not list his reasons for this re-evaluation (*VH*, lxxv). Scragg in his edition also suggests that the homilist of Napier XXX drew from the same library as the compiler of the E-type homiliary and the Vercelli Book itself (*VH*, lxxvii).

56 See below, 22–3.

58 Scragg mentions most of these Andrean materials in *VH*, lxxviii.

59 This discovery was made by Martin, 'Marginalia,' 485. The full antiphon, as cited by Martin, is as follows: 'Cum peruenisset beatus Andreas ad locum ubi crux parata erat, exclamavit et dixit: O bona crux, diu desiderata, et iam concupiscenti animo praeparata: securus et gaudens uenio ad te; ita et tu exultans suscipias me discipulum eius qui pependit in te' ('When St Andrew had come to the place where his cross was prepared, he cried out and said: "O good cross, for so long longed for, and now prepared for a desiring soul: careless and rejoicing I come to thee; so too exulting may you fetch up me, a disciple of Him who hung on thee"). Compare, however, C. Sisam (*Vercelli Book*, 31), who argued that the verse may have derived from Luke 22:40, beginning 'Et cum pervenisset ad locum ...'

60 *Catalogue*, item 349, at p. 436.

- 61 The relationship between the *Magnificat* antiphon for the Feast of St Andrew and *The Dream of the Rood* was first established by M.J.B. Allen and D.G. Calder, trans., *Sources and Analogues of Old English Poetry: The Major Latin Texts in Translation* (Cambridge and Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 1976), 56–7; however, it was Martin ('Marginalia,' 485–6) who made the wider connection between the antiphon and the pen-trial on the fly-leaves in the Vercelli Book. Also see Dorothy M. Horgan, 'The Dream of the Rood and a Homily for Palm Sunday,' *N&Q* n.s. 29 (1982): 388–911.

62 Mary P. Richards, *Texts and Their Traditions in the Medieval Library of Rochester Cathedral Priory*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society Held at Philadelphia for Promoting Useful Knowledge 78.3 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1988), ix. Also see *VH*, lxxviii.

63 See *VH*, xxvii, and also *CHI*.68.

65 Ibid. See also *VH*, lxxvii–lxxix.

67 Nicholas Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury: Christ Church from 597 to 1066* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1984), 278 (as cited in *VH*, lxxix).

70 Dumville, 'English Square Minuscule Script,' 140 n. 39.

71 Ibid. I note in passing that Elaine Treharne's recent article 'Form and Function,' 253–66, cites Dumville's note as evidence that Dumville explicitly places the Vercelli Book at St Augustine's. Unless I have misinterpreted Dumville's argument, Treharne only selectively reports Dumville's case.

73 Paul E. Szarmach, 'Vercelli Homily XX,' *MS 35* (1973): 4–5.

74 *Catalogue*, item 57, postulates two different hands, with the second covering 51–202 of the manuscript.

75 *VH*, 182 and 237. As Scragg points out, Vercelli XIV survives in no other version outside of the Vercelli Book.

76 *VH*, 1–5; Szarmach, ‘Vercelli Homily XX,’ 4–5. On the common ancestry linking this collection to the E -type homiliary, see Richards, *Texts*, 90.

77 As Ker points out (*Catalogue*, item 57), the manuscript is written ‘in small neat script of the “prickly” kind found often in Rochester (and Canterbury) manuscripts of s. xii¹.’ Richards shows further that in **H**, the use of rubrics, ‘crowded into small spaces to the right of each selection,’ are especially common to post-Conquest manuscripts originating in Rochester. For Richards, another localizing feature emerges from the comparison of the forms of excommunication inscribed in Latin and Old English at the end of **H** (pp. 338–9), where the Old English version appears to have been altered both to appear more ‘homiletic’ (added to the Old English version is an opening address to ‘Men þa leofestan,’ commanding its readers to ‘geherað hwæt þeos boc segþ’; ‘hear what this book says’) and in order to accommodate two saints who appear to have held special connections to Rochester. According to Richards, just following the section on St Andrew (the patron saint of Rochester), the scribe adds the witnesses Saint Nicholas (two whom was dedicated ‘an important altar for the laity at Rochester Cathedral) and Saint Augustine (who was the ‘founder of the see’). Furthermore, of the three unique hagiographic items included in **H**, two may reveal links to Rochester, since one of these is again dedicated to Saint Nicholas, while the other is dedicated to Margaret, the ‘patron of a local church owned by the priory.’ For additional observations that link the manuscript to Rochester, see Richards, *Texts*, 91.

79 See Richards, *Texts*, 2 and also her 'Innovations in Ælfrician Homiletic Manuscripts at Rochester,' *Annuaire Medievale* 19 (1979): 16–17.

80 This list is cobbled together from Scragg's introductory notes for each of these homi-lies in *VH*, and from *Fontes*.

81 See Paul E. Szarmach, 'Caesarius of Arles and the Vercelli Homilies,' *Traditio* 26 (1970): 315–23, and *Pembroke*, 98. By contrast, although Caesarius's *sermo* 207 has been identified as a source for Vercelli XI and XIV, these Vercelli texts have not been shown to draw on the same intermediary source from the St Père collection. Moreover, although Vercelli VIII and Pembroke items 18, 24, and 34 all draw upon Caesar-ius's *sermo* 57, the Vercelli text does not show a direct link with these Pembroke-type materials. For further discussion of the connections between the Vercelli texts and that by Caesarius, see below, 49–50, 54, 75, and 204.

82 These findings are compiled from *Fontes*.

84 On the attribution of the discovery to Friedrich Blume, see above, 5 n. 12.

85 For a consideration of the manuscript's date of arrival in Vercelli, see K. Sisam, *Studies*, 113–15; Swanton, *Dream*, 2–4; and *VH*, xxiv.

87 Ibid., 44. The V and R stand for *versicle* and *response* respectively.

- 89 Éamonn Ó Carragáin, 'The Vercelli Book as an Ascetic Florilegium' (unpublished PhD diss., Queen's University Belfast, 1975), 216–17.

90 K. Sisam, *Studies*, 113; Swanton, *Dream*, 2.

91 K. Sisam, *Studies*, 110–12.

92 For the most recent and full discussion of these parallels, see Charles D. Wright, *The Irish Tradition in Old English Literature*, CSASE 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 113–45, though he does not mention the scribble on fol. 63v itself. See below, 219, esp. n. 91 for additional treatment of these passages and the manuscript lacuna in Vercelli IX.

93 See *VH*, 157, where Scragg includes a stemma for the transmission of Vercelli IX.

94 C. Sisam (*Vercelli Book*, 31) notes a possible further example of the words *writ þus* at the bottom of 65v (right at the end of the line at Vercelli X.27), though the script is too faint to read; interestingly, the passage at Vercelli X.23–30 is flawed by several examples of homoeoteleuton, as Donald Scragg points out in his critical apparatus (*VH*, 197), thus showing yet another place where the inscription may have been used to indicate error.

95 See further Debra J. Birch, *Pilgrimage to Rome in the Middle Ages: Continuity and Change* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, and Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 1998), esp. 43 and the maps of the pilgrimage route she provides on 42–4. Also see Halsall, ‘Vercelli and the Vercelli Book,’ 1546, and George Parks, *The English Traveller to Italy* 1 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1954), 19–97 (as cited by Halsall). Other attempts to explain the placement, and perhaps more remarkably the survival, of the manuscript in Vercelli have also proved interesting, though tentative. One theory rests on the presence in Vercelli of a *hospitalis Scottorum*, known as *Santa Brigida degli Scoti*, which was probably in use from the twelfth century, though some have speculated that it may have been established a good deal earlier. Halsall in particular (‘Vercelli and the Vercelli Book,’ 1546–7), rehearses the various arguments in favour of a date as early as the sixth century for the establishment of the hospice, and the evidence for its use by British travellers. Such a hospice, if it was in fact active in the eleventh century, would conceivably have held special attraction for insular travellers.

96 Halsall, 'Vercelli and the Vercelli Book,' 1546; Birch, *Pilgrimage to Rome*, 10–11, and 45–6. On travel during the Anglo-Saxon period to Rome, and the importance of the Anglo-Saxon *schola*, see Nicholas Howe, 'Rome: Capital of Anglo-Saxon England,' *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 34 (2004): 147–72.

97 For further details concerning these and other travellers through Vercelli, see K. Sisam, *Studies*, 116–17.

98 For the names of those previously suggested as possible bearers of the Vercelli Book, see Halsall, 'Vercelli and the Vercelli Book,' 1545–50 and Swanton, *Dream*, 3–4. One such notional figure is Ulf, the Anglo-Norman bishop of Dorchester, who according to chronicle sources attended the synod of 1050 in Vercelli, where he was apparently disciplined for his miscreant behaviour. Though it is unclear why a Norman bishop might reasonably be thought to have the manuscript in his possession, it has been imagined that Ulf may have given the Vercelli Book as a gift or bribe to ameliorate his own imperilled situation. Stephen J. Herbert, in 'The Vercelli Book: A New Hypothesis,' *Speculum* 10.1 (1935): 91–4 at 93. A second is Cardinal Guala Bicchieri, who in 1219 was given a substantial fund by Henry III, drawn from the church of St Andrew at Chesterton, Cambridgeshire, in the Diocese of Ely, to found an abbey and church dedicated to the same S. Andrea in Vercelli (see Gioanni Lampugnani, *Sulla Vita di Guala Bicchieri* [Vercelli, 1842]). Such a circumstance (linking the manuscript to Bicchieri) would theoretically offer a tantalizing link between England and Vercelli, and fuels the speculation that a manuscript containing both the poem *Andreas* and a homily on Guthlac (who lived in Crowland, Lincolnshire, less than fifty miles from Chesterton) might have made a suitable gift for the founding (or re-founding) of this sister institution in Italy. Kenneth Sisam, however, effectively ruled out the connection with Bicchieri by showing that the date of the endowment itself is later than palaeographical evidence of the manuscript's existence in Italy would allow. It is worth noting in passing that it remains a local legend in Vercelli that the edifice established by Guala replaced an earlier church, ostensibly one that was in place in Vercelli during the eleventh century (the earliest palaeographical date for the manuscript's arrival in Italy).

99 The attribution of the founding of the *schola Saxonum* to King Ine is made by Matthew Paris in his *Chronica maiora* (1259), while the attribution to Offa is made by William of Malmesbury in his *Gesta regum anglorum* (ca. 1120; see Birch, *Pilgrimage to Rome*, 132).

100 See Birch, *Pilgrimage to Rome*, 140, who cites as evidence ‘the letter of 1162, written by Peter, cardinal deacon of San Eustachio to Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury,’ where a reference is made ‘to the church of B. Marie, which is called *Sassorum*, placed in Rome for the reception of the English visiting the threshold of the apostles.’

101 For a list of known Anglo-Saxon travellers through Rome and also to the *schola saxonum*, see Veronica Ortenberg, *The English Church and the Continent in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries: Cultural, Spiritual, and Artistic Exchanges* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 149–50. Ortenberg provides no evidence that would help to illuminate the identity of the ‘pilgrim’ bearing the Vercelli Book.

- 102 Francis Peabody Magoun, Jr, 'The Rome of Two Northern Pilgrims: Archbishop Sigeric of Canterbury and Abbot Nikólás of Munkathverá,' *Harvard Theological Review* 33.4 (1940): 267–89. On the broader topic of early medieval pilgrimages in Rome, see further Joyce Hill, 'From Rome to Jerusalem: An Icelandic Itinerary of the Mid-Twelfth Century,' *Harvard Theological Review* 76 (1983): 175–203.

103 For a list of Latin manuscripts brought back from Rome, see, for example, Michael Lapidge's entry for 'Rome' in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Michael Lapidge, John Blair, Simon Keynes, and Donald Scragg (Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001), 398–9 at 399.

104 Birch, *Pilgrimage to Rome*, 65–70.

105 It is, of course, also possible that the person carrying the Vercelli Book died while in Italy. As has been shown in several recent studies (most notably that by Birch, *Pilgrimage to Rome*, 144–6), it was the custom in Italy throughout much of the medieval period that the property of deceased pilgrims was annexed to that of the local hospice or church. It was likewise precisely in order to control the dissolute harbouring of sick pilgrims for profit, and other such money-making schemes, that reforms were eventually issued by Rome in the attempt to control the seizure and allotment of pilgrims' properties. Legislation had to be made to regulate the harbouring of pilgrims as a means of claiming property and grave digging for possessions. A good example is the 1053 bull of Leo IX in which 'this Pope confirmed in the presence of Leo IV that in return for the monastery's and church's care of the pilgrims, the property of those who died without an heir in the Leonine city, or for one mile around it, would go to the use of the brothers who served there' (Birch, *Pilgrimage to Rome*, 145).

106 This portion of the Latin book catalogue is cited from Halsall, 'Vercelli and the Vercelli Book,' 1549.

107 The Latin text is cited in full from Halsall, 'Vercelli and the Vercelli Book,' 1548. The catalogue exists in two copies, both of which are described by Halsall. The approximate date of the catalogue (derived from internal references in the catalogues themselves) is 1768–78.

108 Mistake for the misplaced Old English ‘to him’; see Scragg, Vercelli I.125.

109 A hypothetical case in point is the name of *Andreas* (as it contains no foreign letters), which occurs no fewer than thirty times in the Vercelli Book (twenty-nine times in *Andreas* and once in *Fates*): *Andreas*, 110a, 169a, 189a, 203a, 270a, 285a, 299b, 315a, 352b, 379a, 383b, 572a, 617a, 628a, 643a, 818a, 859a, 914a, 950a, 1020a, 1058a, 1175b, 1184a, 1199a, 1208a, 1316a, 1362a, 1375a, 1692a; *Fates* 16a. The name also appears three times in the opening line of a folio (in *Andreas* 617a [fol. 37v1], 914a [fol. 41v1], and 950a [fol. 42r1]), and another three times in the opening line of a *fitt* (in *Andreas* 352b [fol. 33v9], 950a [fol. 42r1], and 1058a [fol. 43r23]). Even for readers of the Vercelli Book with no Old English at all, it can be imagined that the importance of the name would be self-evident.

- 1 For a recent argument attempting to re-date the so-called Junius Book (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 11), see Lockett, 'Integrated Re-examination,' 141–73.

- 2 For discussions of the authorship of these poems, see especially Albert S. Cook, ed., *The Dream of the Rood: An Old English Poem Attributed to Cynewulf* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), xvii; Andy Orchard, 'Both Style and Substance: The Case for Cynewulf,' in *Anglo-Saxon Styles*, ed. Catherine Karkov and George H. Brown (Binghamton, NY: SUNY Press, 2003), 271–305; and Alison M. Powell, 'Verbal Parallels in *Andreas* and Its Relationship to *Beowulf* and Cynewulf' (unpublished PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2002), 168–233.

- 3 Jonathan T. Randle addresses the term 'homiletic poetry' in 'The Homiletic Context of the Vercelli Book Poems' (unpublished PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 1999).

⁴ See further *VH*, xxv–xxxviii, and Clayton, ‘Homiliaries and Preaching,’ 172.

- 5 For a list of conventional feast days celebrated in the Anglo-Saxon period, see Michael Lapidge, 'Æfric's *Sanctorale*,' in *Holy Men and Holy Women : Old English Prose Saints' Lives and Their Contexts*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach (New York: SUNY Press, 1996), 115–29.

- 6 Homily I, which contains a lacuna in the Vercelli manuscript, may have contained a quotation from John 18, as does the variant version of this homily contained in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 340 (134v–144r). See *VH*, 1–5 for a discussion of the relationship between these texts.

7 For further discussion of genre with respect to Vercelli I and XXIII, see below, 228–9.

- 8 Milton McC. Gatch, *Preaching and Theology in Anglo-Saxon England: Æfric and Wulfstan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 57.

- ⁹ Clayton, 'Homiliaries and Preaching,' 172–3. For an opposing view of the make-up of the manuscript, see Treharne, 'Form and Function,' 262–6.

10 This evidence was compiled from an examination of those manuscripts listed in *Handlist*.

- 11 CCCC 201 contains (among sundry other items) a cluster of five religious poems (on pp. 161–70) as well as a host of homilies and law codes (many of which are attributable to Wulfstan). The poems appear in the manuscript in the following order: *Judgment Day II*, *An Exhortation to Living*, *A Summons to Prayer*, *Lord's Prayer II*, and *Gloria I*. For a discussion of the poetry in this manuscript, see Graham D. Caie, 'Text and Context in Editing Old English: The Case of the Poetry in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 201,' in *The Editing of Old English: Papers from the 1990 Manchester Conference*, ed. Donald G. Scragg and Paul E. Szarmach (Cambridge and Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 1994), 155–62. See also Patrick Wormald, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century*, Legislation and Its Limits, vol. I (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 205–10. For a discussion of Wulfstan's authorship in relation to the prose, see especially *Wulfstan*, 87–98.

- 12 Mary Clayton presents a thorough examination of the audience and setting in which the homilies of the Vercelli collection may have circulated in 'Homiliaries and Preaching,' 172-5.

- 13 The clearest evidence for a preaching context is that several of the homilies are titled for church holidays. See appendix I below, 280–6, for a list of homilies designated for the church calendar.

¹⁴ For a discussion of the repetition of materials in Vercelli II and XXI, see below, 63–105.

- 15 See Paul E. Szarmach, 'The Vercelli Homilies: Style and Structure,' in *The Old English Homily and Its Backgrounds*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach and Bernard F. Huppé (Albany: SUNY Press, 1978), 241–67.

16 K. Sisam, *Studies*, 118.

17 On the Vercelli Book as a devotional reader, see above, xxiv and 5.

- ¹⁸ Milton McC. Gatch, 'Eschatology in the Anonymous Old English Homilies,' *Traditio* 21 (1965): 117–65, at 146, and also *Preaching*, 103.

- 19 See Ó Carragáin, 'Ascetic Florilegium.' On the idea of the monastic reader, see also Éamonn Ó Carragáin, 'How Did the Vercelli Collector Interpret *The Dream of the Rood*?' in *Studies in English Language and Early Literature in Honour of Paul Christophersen*, ed. M. Tilling, Occasional Papers in Language and Language Learning 8 (Coleraine: New University of Ulster, 1981), 63–104, at 66–7; and Clayton, 'Homiliaries and Preaching,' 173.

20 Ó Carragáin's 'booklets' follow (by and large) Celia Sisam's division of the manuscript by major quire-divisions and use of exemplar (see appendix 2 for details), and consist of the following sequence of units: Vercelli I–IV as 'a Lenten booklet'; Vercelli V–X and the beginning of XI (including the poems *Andreas* and *Fates of the Apostles*) as 'an Advent collection'; the conclusion of Vercelli XI–XXII (including the poems *Homiletic Fragment I*, *Soul and Body I*, and *The Dream of the Rood*) as 'a recurring preoccupation' on 'the last things'; and the poem *Elene* and Vercelli XXIII (on the trials of St Guthlac) as expressing 'the devotional preoccupations of the Vercelli Collector.' See further his 'Ascetic Florilegium,' 237–67.

21 See below, 255–6. I borrow the term ‘middle way’ from Thomas D. Hill, ‘The Middle Way: *idel-wuldor* and *egesa* in the Old English *Guthlac A*,’ *RES* n.s. 30 (1979): 182–7. However, see Ó Carragáin (‘Ascetic Florilegium,’ 293), who reads references to fasting in the Vercelli Book as opposing evidence for ascetic doctrine.

22 Wright, 'Tailored,' 214.

23 As Wright demonstrates ('Tailored,' 202–6), sources include, for Vercelli XI, Caesarius of Arles's *sermo* 215 and, for Vercelli XII, Cassian's *De institutis coenobiorum* and Caesarius of Arles's *sermo* 31. Wright also identifies the main source for Vercelli XV in the 'interpolated version' of the anonymous *Apocalypse of Thomas* ; for these Latin texts and their relationship to the Old English homily, see his 'The *Apocalypse of Thomas* : Some New Latin Texts and Their Significance for the Old English Versions,' in *Apocryphal Texts and Traditions in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Katherine Powell and Donald Scragg (Cambridge and Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 2003), 27–64, and also his 'Vercelli Homily XV and *The Apocalypse of Thomas*,' in *New Readings in the Vercelli Book*, ed. Zacher and Orchard.

24 Wright, 'Tailored,' 216. On the question of owning property as addressed in these passages, see too Ó Carragáin, 'Ascetic Florilegium,' 47–9.

25 See above, 7–8.

26 Wright, 'Tailored,' 224.

- 27 Éamonn Ó Carragáin, 'Rome, Ruthwell, Vercelli: *The Dream of the Rood* and the Italian Connection,' in *Vercelli tra oriente ed occidente tra tarda antichità e medioevo*, ed. Vittoria Docetti Corazza, Bibliotheca Germanica: Studi e testi 6 (Alessandria, Italy: Edizioni dell'Orso, 1998), 59–105 at 96.

28 Ó Carragáin, 'Rome, Ruthwell, Vercelli,' 93–7.

29 Treharne, 'Form and Function,' 263.

³⁰ Ibid., 261–4, especially 263.

31 Treharne highlights some of the liturgical connections that underlie these texts; for example, it is noteworthy that the collection includes poems such as *Elene*, associated with the feast of the Invention of the Cross, and *The Dream of the Rood*, which, as Treharne states, 'is suitable for penitential purposes, for Lenten services, for the elucidation of the Good Friday liturgy, or for the Easter Vigil, among many other potential purposes.' Ibid., 264.

³² Treharne (*ibid.*, 254 n. 8) promises a second article treating these matters in depth, and I look forward to reading this study.

33 Milton McC. Gatch, 'The Unknowable Audience of the Blickling Homilies,' *ASE* 18 (1989): 99–115.

34 Clayton, 'Homiliaries and Preaching,' 173–5.

35 Mary Dockray-Miller ('Female Devotion,' 337–54) has recently argued that such forms of address (particularly in the Vercelli Book) cannot be taken as a clear indication of either gender or clerical status. I see two problems here. The first is that the concatenation of homilies in a sequence containing the term *broþer* would seem to suggest that these forms of address were preserved from an earlier exemplar. The second is that while Dockray-Miller is perhaps correct in suggesting the non-gendered use of terms *broþor* and *mann* in the wider corpus of Old English, this explanation does not allow for the possibility of a special register within homiletic literature.

36 See further Vercelli III.1, 14, 25, 43, 84, 119, 125, and 142.

37 Variants texts of the Martin homily are located in the so-called Blickling Book, Princeton University Library, W.H. Scheide Collection 71 (fols. 127r–35v) and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 86 (fols. 62r–81r).

38 For a discussion of this address, see below, 209–11.

- 39 Samantha Zacher, 'The Source of Vercelli VII: An Address to Women,' in *New Readings in the Vercelli Book*, ed. Zacher and Orchard.

40 Exceptions include C. Sisam, *Vercelli Book*, 44 and Dockray-Miller, 'Female Devotion,' 337–54.

- 41 On the so-called Winteney Rule, see Mechthild Gretsch, 'Die Winteney-Version der Regula Sancti Benedicti: Eine frühmittelenglische Bearbeitung der altenglischen Prosaübersetzung der Benediktinerregel,' *Anglia* 96 (1978): 310–48, and Arnold Schröer, ed., *Die Winteney-version der Regula S. Benedicti*, rev. ed. with supplement by Mechthild Gretsch (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1978). For a list of direct addresses to laywomen (*ge wif*), see Zacher, 'Source of Vercelli VII.'

42 The differences between the Old English and Latin versions of the homily represented in Vercelli VII are charted in the appendix I provide in 'Source of Vercelli VII.'

43 Mary Dockray-Miller, 'Female Devotion,' 345–6.

44 Gatch, *Preaching*, 35.

45 See Clayton, 'Homiliaries and Preaching,' 151–71. Clayton redresses in part Gatch's argument (in *Preaching*, 35) that no Carolingian homiliaries were used for preaching to the laity: she demonstrates that Gatch's findings were based on his exclusion of collections containing exegetical homilies, which he felt to be more suitable for a monastic audience. For a discussion of the format, audience, and general background for these various Carolingian homiliaries, see Rosamond McKitterick, *The Frankish Church and the Carolingian Reforms, 789–895* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977), 96–102. On the connection between anonymous vernacular collections and Carolingian homiliaries, see also Dorothy Ina Haines, 'Rhetorical Strategies in Old English Prose: A Study of Three Dramatic Monologues' (unpublished PhD diss. University of Toronto, 1998), 22–31.

46 Clayton, 'Homiliaries and Preaching,' 175.

47 The earliest extant manuscript of the collection is contained in Cambridge, Pembroke College, 25 (sxi², Bury), and a version close to this one appears to be the direct source for Vercelli XIX–XXI. For further discussion of the relationship between the manuscripts, see *VH*, 310–11, and *Pembroke*, 143–55. For a discussion of Vercelli XXI in relation to its sources, see below, 74–91.

48 Thomas L. Amos discusses this type of lay preaching in 'The Origin and Nature of the Carolingian Sermon' (unpublished PhD diss., Michigan State University, 1983), and his 'Preaching and the Sermon in the Carolingian World,' in *De Ore Domini: Preacher and the Word in the Middle Ages*, ed. Thomas L. Amos et al., Studies in Medieval Culture 27 (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1989), 41–60 at 47.

49 See further below, 90–1.

50 The best edition of the Blickling homilies remains *Blickling*, produced in 1874–80. A more recent edition has since been published by Richard Kelly, *The Blickling Homilies : Edition and Translation* (London: Continuum, 2003). However, as I point out in my review of the book in *Notes and Queries* 251.2 n.s. 53 (2006): 216–18, the edition is woefully slack in its acknowledgment of previous scholarship. Also see the review by Milton McC. Gatch, *Church History* 73.4 (2004): 847–9.

51 Clayton, 'Homiliaries and Preaching,' 171.

52 Gatch, *Preaching*, 52–5.

53 See further Clayton (in 'Homiliaries and Preaching,' 177), who refers to Æfric's homily on Job in *CHII*.30.

54 See further *Wulfstan*, 24–36.

55 The manuscript survives as a collection in a single copy, though several of the homilies have circulated individually in different manuscripts. For variant versions of the Blickling homilies, see Janet Bately, *Anonymous Old English Homilies: A Preliminary Bibliography of Source Studies Compiled for Fontes Anglo-Saxonici and Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture* (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, SUNY Press, 1993). Also see Donald G. Scragg, 'The Homilies of the Blickling Manuscript,' in *Literature and Learning in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Michael Lapidge and Helmut Gneuss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 299–316.

56 For the relationship between Vercelli X and Blickling IX, see below, 108 n. 7. For the correspondences between the two items on the life of St Martin, see Marcia A. Dalbey, 'The Good Shepherd and the Soldier of God: Old English Homilies on St Martin of Tours,' *NM* 85 (1984): 422–34. Paul E. Szarmach likewise treats Æfric's text on Martin, in 'Æfric Revises: The Lives of Martin and the Idea of the Author,' in *Unlocking the Wordhord: Anglo-Saxon Studies in Memory of Edward B. Irving, Jr*, ed. Mark C. Amodio and Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 38–61.

57 The Lenten homilies present a generic intersection between catechetical and exegetical models, presenting as they do brief pericopes together with extensive general exhortation. See further Gatch, 'Unknowable Audience,' 112–14, for the use of exegesis in Blickling XI.

58 Blickling I, for example, draws extensively from portions of the Song of Songs 3:7–8, Luke 1:28–53, Matthew 11:29 and 5:8, and Psalm 18:6, while Blickling XIV is clearly influenced by Galatians 2:20 and Luke 1:5–7, 1:17, 1:44, 7:24–8, and 21:18.

59 For the argument that the homilies were also composed in this order, see Scragg, 'Blickling Manuscript,' 299–304.

60 On the order of the items in the manuscript, see Scragg, 'Blickling Manuscript,' 299–304. In using the term *sanctorale*, I follow Lapidge's designation in 'Æfric's *Sanctorale*,' 115–29, representing 'those feasts that are celebrated each year on the same day of the Roman or solar calendar' (115).

61 Clayton, 'Homiliaries and Preaching,' 168.

62 For early proponents of this view, see especially Milton McC. Gatch, 'Eschatology,' 117–65, and Malcolm Godden, 'Æfric and the Vernacular Prose Tradition,' in *The Old English Homily and Its Backgrounds*, ed. Szarmach and Huppé, 99–117.

63 Seminal articles responsible for a shift away from these binary divisions include (in chronological order) Joseph B. Trahern, 'Caesarius of Arles and Old English Literature: Some Contributions and a Recapitulation,' *ASE* 5 (1976): 105–19; Donald G. Scragg, 'The Corpus of Vernacular Homilies and Prose Saints' Lives before Æfric,' *ASE* 8 (1979): 223–77, repr. in *Old English Prose: Basic Readings*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities 1447 (New York: Garland 2000), 73–150; Clayton, 'Homiliaries and Preaching,' 151–98; Joyce Hill, 'Reform and Resistance: Preaching Styles in Late Anglo Saxon England,' in *De l'homélie au sermon: Histoire de la prédication médiévale*, Actes du Colloque international de Louvain-la-Neuve, ed. Jaqueline Hamesse and Xavier Hermand (Louvain-la-Neuve: Institut d'Études Médiévales de l'Université Catholique de Louvain, 1993), 15–46; and Haines, 'Rhetorical Strategies,' 7–14.

64 These volumes have been edited most recently in *CHI* and *CHII*. Other homilies attributed to Æfric have been edited separately: Æfric's collection of saints' lives (the composition of which generally dates to 1002 as a *terminus ad quem*) mostly comprises hagiographical materials, though several homilies can be found interspersed. The remaining homilies (only one of which circulates together with portions of the *Catholic Homilies* before 1100 in London, BL, Cotton Tiberius A.iii) have been treated as supplementary, having been composed over an extended period of time. For a discussion of the dates for these homilies, see *ÆHom*, 146–50. There has been considerable debate with respect to the authorship of several of the items contained in the minor collections, though the burden of speculation has fallen primarily on the hagio-graphical items. Joyce Hill takes up this question with regard to saints' lives in 'The Dissemination of Æfric's *Lives of Saints* : A Preliminary Survey,' in *Holy Men and Holy Women*, ed. Szarmach, 235–59. For treatments of the same with reference to the supplemental homilies, see *ÆHom*, 94–105.

65 Manuscripts before 1100 containing full versions of Æfric's *Catholic Homilies* are catalogued in *Handlist*, items 11, 58, 403, 406, 472, and 569. For fragments and excerpts of items contained in these series, see *Handlist*, 352f, 363e, 428f, 442f, 670f, 811.5f, 816.6f, 828f, and 830f (with 'e' designating excerpts, and 'f' fragments).

66 In relation to Æfric's *CHI* and *CHII*, Lapidge defines the *sanctorale* as follows: out of the forty texts compiled in each of Æfric's *CHI* and *CHII*, nineteen in *CHI* and fifteen or sixteen in *CHII* are designated for the *sanctorale* ('Æfric's *Sanctorale*,' 115–18). It is important to label those saints' lives intended for the *sanctorale*, since, as Jane Roberts points out in her review of Mechthild Gretsch's *Æfric and the Cult of Saints in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (in the *Journal of Theological Studies* 58 [2007]: 733–6), there is a tendency to misuse the term in relation to Æfric's work.

67 That Æfric intended the works to be read either in alternate years or together as a complete collection is supported by the Latin preface to *CHII*.1–2.

68 Though Wulfstan's canon has now been largely defined, there is still considerable debate with respect to the authorship of several items, homiletic and otherwise: see Jonathan Wilcox, 'The Dissemination of Wulfstan's Homilies: The Wulfstan Tradition in Eleventh-Century Vernacular Preaching,' in *England in the Eleventh Century*, ed. C. Hicks, Harlaxton Medieval Studies 2 (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1992), 199–217. For differences in terms of style between Ælfric's and Wulfstan's styles, see further Hill, 'Reform and Resistance,' 18–20.

69 For manuscripts before 1100 containing Wulfstan's Old English homilies, see *Handlist*, items 65.5, 108, 637, 644, and 774; for the same in Latin, see 59, 73, 341, 388, and 814.

71 Though there remains a large corpus of anonymous homilies and saints' lives, catalogued in the main by Janet Bately (as previously cited) and Scragg (in 'Corpus,' 209–30), these have not on the whole been influential in the discussion of the Vercelli Book, and for the moment will be left aside.

72 For example, in his two homilies for the Assumption of the Virgin, Æfric attacks the type of apocryphal lore that can be found in Blickling IV for the Assumption and Blickling XVII for St Michael's Church (2–13 and 196–211). In his own writing, Æfric uses only what he considers to be the most orthodox of patristic and Carolingian sources. In the Latin preface to *CHI*.15–16, he makes special mention of Augustine, Jerome, Bede, Gregory, Smaragdus, and Haymo.

73 According to the *Fontes* database, redactions of the *Visio Pauli* serve as sources for a series of anonymous works, including Napier XLVI, Vercelli IX, Blickling IV, a Homily for Easter in CCCC MS 162 (Ker 38, article 2), the anonymous Vision of Leofric and also, more speculatively, *Guthlac* A.1–29.

74 See especially Hill, 'Reform and Resistance,' 33.

75 For specific examples, see further Hill, 'Reform and Resistance,' 38–40; Haines, 'Rhetorical Strategies,' 7–14; and Mary Swan, 'Æfric's *Catholic Homilies* in the Twelfth Century,' in *Rewriting Old English in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Mary Swan and Elaine Treharne, CSASE 30 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 62–82.

76 Joyce Hill, for example, writes (in 'Reform and Resistance,' 21) that 'complex theological issues (such as the opening of John's Gospel, the nature of the Trinity, or the meaning of the Eucharist), which Ælfric readily tackles in the course of his exegesis, are rarely discussed, and although an authority may be cited from time to time, there is no sense that a tradition is being deliberately articulated and consciously transmitted.'

⁷⁷ See, for example, Scragg's discussion of misquoted Latin in Vercelli XXII (*VH*, 367).

78 All the information in the following section derives from *Fontes*. See too Adam Dunbar McCoy, 'The Use of the Writings of English Authors in Old English Homiletic Literature' (unpublished PhD diss., Cornell University, 1973), which has a very useful (if now a little outdated) appendix, 'The Homilies and Their Sources' (176–237).

79 A passage from Vercelli IX.151–63 is held to be an analogue for a passage in the second branch of the *Mabinogion* (D.S. Thomson, ed. *Branwen Uerch Lyr*, Medieval and Modern Welsh Series 2 [Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1961], lines 177–90). One might add that Vercelli IX.185–99 also has parallels with vernacular Irish texts such as the *Bethu Phatraic* (ed. K. Mulchrone [Dublin: Hodges & Figgis, 1939], lines 2105–7. See further Wright, *Irish Tradition*, 209.

80 'New' sources have since been identified for Vercelli IV, VII, and XII, while extensive analogues have newly been proposed for Vercelli V and VI. See further (following this order) Charles D. Wright, 'The Old English "Macarius" Homily, Vercelli Homily IV, and Ephrem Latinus, *De paenitentia*,' in *Via Crucis: Early Medieval Sources and Ideas in Memory of James E. Cross*, ed. Thomas N. Hall, with Thomas D. Hill and Charles D. Wright (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2002), 210–34; Zacher, 'The Source of Vercelli VII'; Wright, 'Tailored,' 203–27; and Thomas N. Hall, 'The Portents at Christ's Birth in Vercelli Homilies V and VI: Some Analogues from Medieval Sermons and Biblical Commentaries,' in *New Readings in the Vercelli Homilies*, ed. Zacher and Orchard.

81 Wright, 'Tailored,' 203–27, and Zacher, 'The Source of Vercelli VII.'

82 So, for example, traces of no fewer than four different redactions of the *Visio S. Pauli* have been found in Vercelli IX; see further Wright, *Irish Tradition*, 113–16, 136–7, 145–8, 157–9, and 165–7. Similarly, Wright’s discovery of six new Latin texts of the *Apocalypse of Thomas* has enabled him to isolate the family of texts from which Vercelli XV drew its source, in the ‘interpolated version’; see further Wright, ‘Vercelli Homily XV.’ Likewise, Vercelli III seems to draw exclusively on a text close to the Latin homily that appears as item 22 in Cambridge, Pembroke College 25 (the so-called Homiliary of St Père de Chartres); see Helen L. Spencer, ‘Vernacular and Latin Versions of a Sermon for Lent: “A Lost Penitential Homily” Found,’ *MS 44* (1982): 271–305.

83 For treatment of Vercelli II and its relation to Vercelli XXI, see below 63–105.

84 See Wright 'Apocalypse of Thomas,' 27–64, and also his 'Vercelli Homily XV.'

85 On Vercelli XVIII in particular, see further below, 227 n. 11 and 228–9, respectively.

86 On the homilies of Caesarius of Arles, see above, 20 n. 18.

87 The texts that have yielded the greatest number of separate source records in the *Fontes* database are Vercelli V (24 records), IX (24), XIX (26), and XX (22).

88 This number is approximate, and is subject to change as biblical sources continue to be identified. Several new biblical parallels have been cited for Vercelli VII (see Zacher, 'The Source of Vercelli VII'), and in the table of figurative tropes in the Vercelli Book below, 186–7 and 209–12.

89 See especially below, 72–4 and 94–5.

⁹⁰ See further Trahern, 'Caesarius of Arles,' 105–19; and the discussion of Caesarius's *sermo* 207 above, 20 n. 81.

91 For the most comprehensive re-evaluation of this material, see especially Trahern, 'Caesarius of Arles,' 105–19. Also see Haines, 'Rhetorical Strategies,' 19–22 for further discussion of Caesarius's impact on preaching practices in the Middle Ages.

⁹² The on-line *Fontes* database lists putative parallels linking Vercelli II, III, V, XI, XIV, XVII, XIX, XX, and XXI to other Vercelli homilies.

93 Such an analysis of all significant parallel phrasing among the Vercelli homilies as a group will be available as part of the wider *Anglo-Saxon Formulary* project directed by Andy Orchard. When complete, the results should complement those available through *Fontes*, and provide a much fuller picture of the interrelationships between the Vercelli homilies than has been available so far.

94 Ó Carragáin's assessment of the punctuation in the Vercelli Book ('Ascetic Florilegium,' 24–36) leads him to a similar conclusion about the relationship between the prose and poetic texts in the collection.

95 I am grateful to Andy Orchard for sharing with me his discovery about the spacing of the poems in the Vercelli manuscript.

96 For an edition of all the poetry in the manuscript, see *ASPR* II.

97 For a general examination of the homiletic content of the poems in the Vercelli Book, see Randle, 'The Homiletic Context.'

98 See especially Gordon Whatley, 'Bread and Stone: Cynewulf's *Elene* 611–618,' *NM* 76 (1975): 550–60; Thomas D. Hill, 'Bread and Stone, Again: *Elene* 611–18,' *NM* 81 (1980): 252–57; and Charles D. Wright, 'The Pledge of the Soul: A Judgment Theme in Old English Homiletic Literature and Cynewulf's *Elene*,' *NM* 91 (1990): 23–30.

99 For a general study of Cynewulf's adaptation of Latin sources and rhetoric, see Dorothy M. Jehle, 'Latin Rhetoric in the Signed Poems of Cynewulf' (unpublished PhD diss., University of Loyola, Chicago, 1973). For studies on the Latin sources for individual poems, see, for example, Michael Lapidge, 'Cynewulf and the *Passio S. Iulianae*,' in *Unlocking the Wordhoard*, ed. Amodio and O'Brien O'Keeffe, 47–171, which places particular emphasis on the poem's literary inheritance. See also Peter Clemons, 'Cynewulf's Image of the Ascension,' in *England before the Conquest*, ed. Peter Clemons and Kathleen Hughes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 293–304, repr. in *Cynewulf: Basic Readings*, ed. Bjork, 109–32, which considers in addition to Latinate and vernacular influences Cynewulf's inspiration through the visual arts.

100 See, for example, Éamonn Ó Carragáin, 'Crucifixion as Annunciation: The Relation of *The Dream of the Rood* to the Liturgy Reconsidered,' *ES* 63 (1982): 487–505, and also his 'Vercelli Collector,' 63–104. Also see E.R. Anderson, 'Liturgical Influence in *The Dream of the Rood*,' *Neophilologus* 73 (1989): 293–304; Andy Orchard, 'ReReading *The Wanderer* : The Value of Cross-References,' in *Via Crucis*, ed. Hall, with Hill and Wright, 13–16; and Ute Schwab, 'Exegetische und homiletische Stilformen in *Dream of the Rood*,' in *Geistliche Denkformen in der Literatur des Mittelalters*, ed. Ruth Schmidt-Wiegand, Klaus Speckenbach, and Klaus Grubmüller, Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften 51 (Munich: W. Fink, 1984), 101–30.

101 For studies of this poem, see especially Douglas Moffat, ed., *The Old English Soul and Body* (Wolfeboro, NH: D.S. Brewer, 1990). For prose treatments of the soul's address to the body, see [chapter 5](#) below, 140–78.

102 On the correspondences between *Soul and Body I* in the Vercelli Book and the abridged *Soul and Body II* in the Exeter Book, see Moffat, ed., *Old English Soul and Body*.

103 Robert C. Rice, 'The Penitential Motif in Cynewulf's *Fates of the Apostles* and in His Epilogues,' *ASE* 6 (1977): 105–19. See also James E. Cross, 'Cynewulf's Traditions about the Apostles in *Fates of the Apostles*,' *ASE* 8 (1979): 163–75, repr. in *Cynewulf: Basic Readings*, ed. Bjork, 79–94; and Constance B. Hieatt, 'The *Fates of the Apostles* : Imagery, Structure, and Meaning,' *Papers in Language and Literature* 10 (1974): 115–25, repr. in *Cynewulf: Basic Readings*, ed. Bjork, 67–78. The change in terms of critical attitude towards this feature can be measured by the fact that early editors originally left off the ending of the poem.

104 See, for example, James W. Earl, 'The Typological Structure of *Andreas*,' in *Old English Literature in Context: Ten Essays*, ed. John D. Niles (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1980), 66–89; Constance B. Hieatt, 'The Harrowing of Mermedonia: Typo-logical Patterns in the Old English *Andreas*,' *NM* 77 (1976): 49–62; Marie Michelle Walsh, 'The Baptismal Flood in the Old English *Andreas* : Liturgical and Typological Depths,' *Traditio* 33 (1977): 132–58; and Charles D. Wright, 'Matthew's Hebrew Gospel in *Andreas* and in Old English Prose,' *N&Q* 30 (1983): 101–4. For further discussion of the homiletic structure of *Andreas*, see [chapter 8](#) below, 272–4.

105 For examples, see D.R. Letson, 'The Old English *Physiologus* and the Homiletic Tradition,' *Florilegium* 1 (1979): 15–41; James E. Cross, 'The Conception of the Old English Phoenix,' in *Old English Poetry: Fifteen Essays*, ed. R. Creed (Providence: Brown University Press, 1967), 129–52. Also see several articles by Jane Roberts, including 'The Exeter Book: *swa is lar 7 ar to spowendre spræce gelæded*,' *Dutch Quarterly Review* 11 (1981): 302–19, which looks at some homiletic reflexes in the so-called Exeter Book; 'Some Reflections on the Metre of *Christ III*,' in *From Anglo-Saxon to Early Middle English: Studies Presented to E.G. Stanley*, ed. Malcolm Godden, Douglas Gray, and Terry Hoad (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 33–59, at 44, where she suggests that *Christ III* and *Guthlac A* should be compared stylistically with the Blickling and Vercelli homilies; and 'A Man "Boca Gleaw" and His Musings,' in *Intertexts: Studies in Early Insular Culture Presented to Paul E. Szarmach*, ed. Virginia Blanton and Helene Scheck, ACMRS (Tempe, AZ: ACMRS, 2008), 121–39, esp. 133, which compares *Vainglory* and passages from Vercelli XX.

106 Several studies focus on the common sources between Vercelli VIII and the Cynewulf poem. The earliest, by Rudolph Willard, 'Vercelli Homily VIII and the Christ,' *PMLA* 42 (1927): 314–30 cites the common source as Caesarius of Arles's *sermo* 57. Edward B. Irving Jr has likewise pointed out the influence of Caesarius's *sermo* 58 in the poem in 'Latin Prose Sources for Old English Verse,' *JEGP* 57 (1958): 588–95, while Trahern, 'Caesarius of Arles,' 105–19, cites the same as a source for Vercelli VIII. Also see generally D.R. Letson, 'The Homiletic Nature of Cynewulf's Ascension Poem,' *Florilegium* 2 (1980): 192–216.

107 For a recent discussion of this attribution, see Michael Lapidge, ‘Bede and the “*Versus de die Iudicii*”’, in *Nova de veteribus: Mittel-und neulateinische Studien für Paul Gerhard Schmidt*, ed. Andreas Bihrer and Elisabeth Stein (Munich and Leipzig: K.G. Saur, 2004), 103–11.

108 See especially Graham D. Caie, ed., *The Old English Poem Judgment Day II: A Critical Edition* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000), 22–32.

109 Ibid., 19–22. For commentary on just one of the poems (*The Rewards of Piety*), see Samantha Zacher, ‘The Rewards of Poetry: “Homiletic” Verse in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 201,’ *SELIM* 12 (2003–4), 83–108.

110 See esp. Douglas Moffat, 'The Grave in Early Middle English Verse: Metaphor and Archaeology,' *Florilegium* 6 (1984): 96–102, and also his *The Soul's Address to the Body: The Worcester Fragments* (East Lansing, MI: Colleagues Press, 1987). Also see Louise Dudley, 'The Grave,' *Modern Philology* 11 (1913–14): 429–42; Douglas D. Short, 'Aesthetics and Unpleasantness: Classical Rhetoric in the Medieval English Lyric *The Grave*,' *SN* 48 (1976): 291–9; and Seth Lerer, 'The Genre of *The Grave* and the Origins of the Middle English Lyric,' *MLQ* 58 (1997): 127–61.

111 For verbal and thematic parallels, compare, for example, Vercelli IX.114–18 with *The Grave*, lines 23–30, both of which describe the diminution of the corpse's hair. Also generally compare Vercelli IX.114–18, which develops the close and oppressive dimensions of the grave and the appearance of worms, with the imagery developed in *The Grave*, lines 1–17.

112 Peter Clemoes, *Interactions of Thought and Language in Old English Poetry*, CSASE 12 (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), 43–5 and 155–7. As we shall see below, 243–4, Clemoes's comparison of Hrothgar's sermon with Vercelli homilies XV–XVIII, makes it a particularly apt reference. See further Andy Orchard, *A Critical Companion to Beowulf* (Cambridge and Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 2003), 158–62.

113 For formal studies of Æfric's style, see especially *ÆHom*, 105–36. Also see Anne Middleton, 'Æfric's Answerable Style: The Rhetoric of the Alliterative Prose,' *Studies in Medieval Culture* 4 (1973): 83–91. For examinations of Wulfstan's style, see especially Angus McIntosh, 'Wulfstan's Prose,' 35 (1949): 109–42; Andy Orchard, 'Crying Wolf: Oral Style and the *Sermones Lupi*,' *ASE* 21 (1992): 239–64; and Ida Masters Hollowell, 'On the Two-Stress Theory of Wulfstan's Rhythm,' *PQ* 61 (1982): 1–11. Matthew Townend's recently edited volume on Wulfstan (*Wulfstan, Archbishop of York: The Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference* [Turnhout: Brepols, 2004]) contains a number of essays addressing the language, form, and content of Wulfstan's sermons, including, on the topic of his prose rhythms and rhetoric, an essay by Andy Orchard, 'Re-Editing Wulfstan: Where's the Point?' 63–92.

114 An especially formative collection remains *The Old English Homily and Its Background*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach and Bernard Huppé (Albany: SUNY Press, 1978), which presents the first volume dedicated to the systematic examination of prose style in a wide range of vernacular homilies, with several studies addressing elements of overlap between poetry and prose. A more recent treatment of the subject has appeared in an edited volume by Aaron Kleist, *Precedence, Practice, and Appropriation: The Old English Homily* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008). For an extended treatment of stylistics in the Vercelli homilies, see Francis Marvin Clough III, 'Theme, Symbol, and Narrative in the Homilies of the Vercelli Book: A Descriptive Index' (unpublished PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 1984). See also Stephen H. Goldman, 'The Old English Vercelli Homilies: Rhetoric and Transformational Analysis,' *Journal of English Linguistics* 6 (1972): 20–7. For further studies on individual homilies and their adaptation of Latin sources, see below, especially 106–39.

115 D.R. Letson, 'The Poetic Content,' 139–56.

- 116 Charles D. Wright, 'More Old English Poetry in Vercelli Homily XXI' in *Early Medieval Texts and Interpretations: Studies Presented to Donald G. Scragg*, ed. Elaine Treharne and Susan Rosser, MRTS 252 (Tempe, AZ: ACMRS, 2002), 245–62.

- 117 See further Angus McIntosh, 'Wulfstan's Prose,' 109–42; E.G. Stanley, 'Alliterative Ornament and Alliterative Rhythmical Discourse in Old High German and Old Frisian Compared with Similar Manifestations in Old English,' *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 106 (1984): 184–217; and Haruko Momma, *The Composition of Old English Poetry*, CSASE 20 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 8–27 (all cited by Wright, 'More Old English Poetry,' 248–9).

- 118 See further Roberta Frank, 'Poetic Words in Late Old English Prose,' in *From Anglo-Saxon to Early Middle English: Studies Presented to Eric Stanley*, ed. Malcolm Godden, Douglas Gray, and Terry Hoad (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 87–107; Eric G. Stanley, 'Studies in the Prosaic Vocabulary of Old English Verse,' *NM* 72 (1971): 385–418; Mary P. Richards, 'Prosaic Poetry: Late Old English Poetic Composition,' in *Old English and New: Studies in Language and Linguistics in Honor of Fredric G. Cassidy*, ed. Joan H. Hall et al. (New York: Garland Press, 1992), 63–75; and M.S. Griffith, 'Poetic Language and the *Paris Psalter* : The Decay of the Old English Tradition,' *ASE* 20 (1991): 167–86.

119 See also Hildegard L. Tristram, *Early Insular Preaching: Verbal Artistry and Method of Composition* (Vienna: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1995).

120 Clare A. Lees, 'Aesthetics and Belief: Æfric's False Gods,' in *Tradition and Belief: Religious Writing in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 46–78.

121 Wright, ed., *Irish Tradition*, 215–71.

- 122 Thomas N. Hall, 'Old Norse-Icelandic Sermons,' in *The Sermon*, ed. Beverly Mayne Kienzle, *Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 661–709.

123 With regard to the use of style and rhetoric in the Blickling Book, see for example Alyson Cox, 'Stylistic Variation in the Blickling *Temporale* Homilies' (unpublished PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 1998); Marcia Dalbey, 'Structure and Style in the Blickling Homilies for the *Temporale* ' (unpublished PhD diss., University of Illinois, 1968); and Elizabeth J. Jeffrey, *Blickling Spirituality and the Old English Vernacular Homily: A Textual Analysis* (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 1989).

124 See Szarmach, 'Style and Structure,' 242–67; and Ó Carragáin, 'Ascetic Florilegium.' See now Szarmach's magisterial analysis of the styles represented in the Vercelli Book in 'The Vercelli Prose and Anglo-Saxon Literary History,' in *New Readings in the Vercelli Homilies*, ed. Zacher and Orchard.

126 Charles D. Wright has most fully articulated this specialized use of the term 'enumerative' (see Wright, *Irish Tradition*, especially 49–105).

- 127 Michael Lapidge, 'Schools, Learning, and Literature,' in *Anglo-Latin Literature 900–1066* (London and Rio Grande: Hambledon Press, 1993), 11–12.

128 This particular formulation is cited from Gabriele Knappe, 'Classical Rhetoric in Anglo-Saxon England,' *ASE* 27 (1998): 16–29.

129 Beverly Mayne Kienzle, 'Medieval Sermons and Their Performance,' in her edited volume, *The Sermon*, Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental 81–3 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 90; she borrows the term 'illocutionary' from J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955), 6–13 (as cited by Kienzle).

131 See especially Neil Wright, 'Bede and Virgil,' *Romanobarbica* 6 (1981–2): 361–79, repr. in his *History and Literature in Late Antiquity and the Early Medieval West* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1995), no. XI; J.D.A. Ogilvy, *Books Known to the English, 597–1066* (Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1967); Michael Lapidge, 'Surviving Booklists from Anglo-Saxon England,' in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Michael Lapidge and Helmut Gneuss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 33–89, repr. in *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: Basic Readings*, ed. Mary P. Richards (New York: Garland, 1994), 87–167 [updating Ogilvy]; and Lapidge's monumental *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Helmut Gneuss, *Books and Libraries in Early England* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996); and his *Handlist*.

132 On these Anglo-Saxon curricular texts, see Donald A. Bullough, 'The Educational Tradition in England from Alfred to Ælfric: Teaching *Utriusque Linguae*,' in *La Scuola nell'Occidente latino dell'alto Medioevo*, Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo 19 (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'alto Medioevo, 1972), 453–94; and Michael Lapidge, whose numerous publications on the subject can be found in his two volumes of collected works, in *Anglo-Latin Literature 600–899* and *900–1066* (London and Rio Grande, OH: Hambledon Press, 1993 and 1996), with an especially helpful overview in his 'Schools, Learning, and Literature in Tenth-Century England,' in *Anglo-Latin Literature 900–1066*, 1–48.

133 See Knappe, 'Classical Rhetoric,' 16–29, which is an abbreviated version of her *Traditionen der klassischen Rhetorik im angelsächsischen England*, Anglistische Forschungen 236 (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1996), and also her 'The Rhetorical Aspect of Grammar Teaching in Anglo-Saxon England,' *Rhetorica* 17 (1999): 1–35. Also see Jackson J. Campbell, 'Rhetoric in Old English Literature: Adaptation of Classical Rhetoric in Old English Literature,' in *Medieval Eloquence : Studies in the Theory and Practice of Medieval Rhetoric*, ed. James J. Murphy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 173–9. For a contrasting opinion, see Luke Reinsma, 'Rhetoric in England: The Age of Ælfric, 970–1020,' *Communication Monographs* 44 (1977): 390–403. A new study by Janie Steen, entitled *Verses and Virtuosity: The Adaptation of Latin Rhetoric in Old English Poetry* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008) promises to tackle in part the question of direct influence between Old English poetry and rhetorical analysis.

134 Cf. Andy Orchard, *A Critical Companion to Beowulf*, 77–9, and ‘Oral Tradition,’ in *Reading Old English Texts*, ed. Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), 101–23.

135 It will be my practice to refer most often to these two groups of agents as being responsible for the production of the Vercelli Book. It must be allowed, however, that this production may well have brought together the efforts of several more agents, including as many as that of a 'redactor,' 'editor,' 'compiler,' and 'collector,' as pointed out by Gatch, 'Eschatology,' 136–60 (as cited by Szarmach, 'Vercelli Prose').

- 1 *VH*, xx. Scragg supports the conclusion he reached in 1973, when he surveyed the palaeography and codicology of the manuscript, arguing that 'it is difficult to discern any principle of arrangement in the items of the collection. No attempt is made to follow the order of the church year, and the poems are distributed amongst the homilies in a way that is difficult to understand' ('Compilation,' 318–19). See further Milton McC. Gatch, 'Eschatology,' 117–65, and Paul E. Szarmach, 'Style and Structure,' 241–67; although both these authors emphasize the literary merits of individual homilies, they suggest no particular links between homilies. By contrast, Éamonn Ó Carragáin, argues strongly for a close connection between the texts in the manuscript (see generally his 'Ascetic Florilegium' and 'The Vercelli Collector').

² See Hall, 'Portents,' forthcoming.

- ³ For Scragg's discussion of some of these repetitions, see 'Compilation,' 319. Also, see below appendix 1 (280–6) for a full list of the homilies set for the *temporale*.

⁴ This view has been expressed by Gatch, 'Eschatology,' 117–65; the argument is developed further in his *Preaching and Theology*, 102–4.

- 5 It has been argued by others that the absence of a fitting model for the design of the Vercelli Book among Carolingian homiliaries shows it to be *sui generis*. For specific references, see above, 32, esp. n. 9, and 37.

- 6 The Latin source text is witnessed most fully in the so-called St. Père homiliary in Cambridge, Pembroke College 25, item 22; for a description of the manuscript and relevant bibliography, see *Pembroke*, 27. With regard to the relationship between Vercelli III and XX, Helen L. Spencer points out that both vernacular homilies omit a quotation from Origen that appears in their source in “‘A Lost Penitential Homily’ Found,’ 291, for lines 103–5. Spencer also identifies possible further overlap between Vercelli III.134–5 and XX.16–22, though the material may come directly from the Epistle of James 5:17–18, rather than the Latin homily itself. On the textual repetitions between Vercelli III and XX, see *VH*, 70 and 330.

- 7 On the materials common to Vercelli II and XXI, see *VH*, 48–69, and 347–65, and E.G. Stanley, ‘The Judgment of the Damned (from CCCC 201 and Other Manuscripts) and the Definition of Old English Verse,’ in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Michael Lapidge and Helmut Gneuss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 363–91.

8 See, for example, Gatch, 'Eschatology,' 143, and Scragg, 'Compilation,' 319 and *VH*, 190. For the contrasting point of view, see Szarmach, 'Style and Structure,' 252.

- ⁹ Roy M. Liuzza has commented on this repetition most fully in ‘The Texts of the Old English *Riddle 30*,’ *JEGP* 87 (1988): 1–15.

- 10 The relationship between the Guthlac poems has been debated widely. Particularly illuminating are those discussions found in Jane Roberts, ed., *The Guthlac Poems of the Exeter Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 48–63; Roy M. Liuzza, ‘The Old English *Christ* and *Guthlac* : Texts, Manuscripts, and Critics,’ *RES* 41 (1990): 1–11; and Daniel G. Calder, ‘*Guthlac A* and *Guthlac B* : Some Discriminations,’ in *Anglo-Saxon Poetry: Essays in Appreciation for John C. McGalliard*, ed. Lewis E. Nicholson and Dolores Warwick Frese (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), 65–80.

- 11 For an overview of all such instances of repetition in the extant poetic corpus see K. Sisam, *Studies*, 31–44, and Carol Braun Pasternack, *The Textuality of Old English Poetry*, CSASE 13 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 15–17. Poetry surviving in more than one version is also the focus of a study by Peter Orton, *The Transmission of Old English Poetry*, Westfield Publications in Medieval and Renaissance Studies 12 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000).

12 These poetic terms hardly need introduction. Selective studies include (reflecting the above order): Albert B. Lord, 'Ring Composition in *Maldon* : Or, a Possible Case of Chiasmus in a Late Anglo-Saxon Poem,' in *The Ballad and Oral Literature*, ed. Joseph Harris (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 233–42; John D. Niles, 'Ring Composition and the Structure of *Beowulf*,' *PMLA* 94 (1979): 924–35; Constance B. Hieatt, 'On Envelope Patterns (Ancient and – Relatively – Modern) and Nonce Formulas,' in *Comparative Research on Oral Traditions: A Memorial for Milman Parry*, ed. John Miles Foley and Albert B. Lord (Columbus, OH: Slavica, 1987), 245–58; A.C. Bartlett, *The Larger Rhetorical Patterns in Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, Columbia University Studies in English and Comparative Literature 12 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935), 9; and John D. Niles, *Beowulf : The Poem and Its Tradition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 152–62. For an extremely useful list of rhetorical terms, their definitions, and applications in the context of Old English poetry, see Steen, *Verse and Virtuosity*, esp. 21–34.

13 Important exceptions that focus on the use of repetition as a stylistic feature in prose include Orchard, 'Crying Wolf,' 239–64, and the response made by Donald G. Scragg in *Dating and Style in Old English Composite Homilies*, H.M. Chadwick Memorial Lectures 9 (Cambridge: Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic, 1998). See also Clare Lees, 'Aesthetics and Belief,' 46–78, and Siegfried Wenzel's studies of stylistics in later sermons in 'The Sermon as an Art Form,' in his *Preachers, Poets, and the Early English Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 61–100. Other studies have developed generally a sophisticated vocabulary for talking about artistic features in homiletic materials. Important treatments include those by Clayton, 'Homiliaries and Preaching,' 207–42; Hill, 'Reform and Resistance,' 15–46; and Swan and Treharne, *Rewriting Old English*.

- 14 For repetitions within manuscripts containing letters from the so-called Bonifatian correspondence, see letters 11, 22, and 23 in M. Tangl, ed., *Die Briefe des heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus*, MGH, Epistolae Selectae 1, 2nd ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968). Andy Orchard discusses the Bonifatian and Wulfstan examples in 'On Editing Wulfstan,' in *Early Medieval Texts and Interpretations: Studies Presented to Donald G. Scragg*, ed. Elaine Treharne and Susan Rosser, MRTS 252 (Tempe, AZ: ACMRS, 2003), 311–40, and in 'Old Sources, New Resources: Finding the Right Formula for Boniface,' *ASE* 30 (2001): 15–38, respectively. For the repetitions in BL, Cleopatra B. xiii + London, Lambeth Palace Library 489, see Treharne, 'Form and Function,' 262.

15 C. Sisam, *Vercelli Book*, 37.

16 For discussions concerning the contiguous circulation of these texts, see Szarmach, 'Style and Structure,' 248; Scragg, 'Dunstan's Day,' 181–92; and *Pembroke*, 154. Michael Fox has also recently argued that Vercelli homilies XIX–XXI, linked in their exemplar, are likewise connected formally and thematically through their use of classical *narratio*. See his 'Vercelli XIX–XXI, the Ascension Day Homily in CCCC 162 and the Catechetical Tradition from Augustine to Wulfstan,' in *New Readings in the Vercelli Book*, ed. Zacher and Orchard.

17 For a fuller discussion of these exemplars, see Scragg, 'Compilation,' 317–43.

19 Scragg adds this reassessment in the postscript to his 'Compilation,' 317–43, after reviewing the evidence presented by C. Sisam (*Vercelli Book*, 37–43). According to Sisam, in the case of Vercelli I, the scribe used extra leaf (8 + 1) in order to finish copying the homily neatly within the allotted space, so suggesting that the text may have been prepared as an independent item before the scribe decided to include it in the Vercelli Book (C. Sisam, *Vercelli Book*, 37). In the example of quire 2 (consisting of fols. 10–18), containing part of Vercelli II (fols. 9v–12r), all of Vercelli III (fols. 12v–16r), and part of Vercelli IV (fols. 16v–24v), the scribe did not provide enough space to copy the whole of Vercelli IV, and Sisam argues that another text (now lost) had been originally used for fols. 16v–18v that, once deleted, was later replaced by the text of Vercelli IV as it became available to the scribe (C. Sisam, *Vercelli Book*, 37).

20 On the role of the ‘booklet’ in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, see P.R. Robinson, ‘The “Booklet”: A Self-Contained Unit in Composite Manuscripts,’ in *Codicologica*, 3, ed. A. Gruys and J.P. Gumbert (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1980), 46–69, repr. as ‘Self Contained Units in Composite Manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon Period,’ in *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: Basic Readings*, ed. Richards, 25–35. On the specific arrangement of ‘booklets’ in the Vercelli Book, see Ó Carragáin, ‘Ascetic Florilegium,’ 220–36.

21 Ó Carragáin, 'The Vercelli Collector,' 82.

22 C. Sisam, *Vercelli Book*, 37.

23 ASPR II, *The Vercelli Book*, xxxix.

24 While Sisam reads the late inclusion of *The Dream of the Rood* as providing no more than a filler text sized appropriately to fill the gap between *Homiletic Fragment I* and homily XIX (Sisam, ed., *Vercelli Book*, 39), Ó Carragáin argues that aforementioned changes were made to the manuscript precisely to accommodate this particular poem ('Ascetic Florilegium,' 220–36).

25 See below, 290.

26 Table 1 does not take into account portions of Vercelli II which are not present in Vercelli XXI. This information is discussed below, 91–105. For the sources upon which the materials in Vercelli XXI are drawn, see *Pembroke*, 143–73.

28 Ibid., 143–73.

29 For an excellent discussion of the use of antithesis in these catalogues, see Szarmach, 'Style and Structure,' 243–4.

30 The appearance of Judgment Day materials in Vercelli XXI is not out of place. Precedents for this kind of thematic intermixture in Rogationtide texts can be found in at least four vernacular homilies in *Rogationtide* 3, 9, 10, and 11 (xv–xxv). James E. Cross elsewhere demonstrated that while the combination of Doomsday and Rogationtide materials is unusual in Latin homilies, *sermo* 157 of Caesarius of Arles may be seen as an apt model for this type of generic fusion. As Cross points out, ‘Caesarius merely discussed the situation and the need to beware and prepare for the day [of Judgment], but the scene is there for other writers to describe within the period of festival’ (*Pembroke*, 155).

- 31 For variant readings, together with a parallel edition of Vercelli II and the homily contained in CCCC 419, see *VH*, 52–65. An edition of the relevant selections from the homily contained in CCCC 201 (78–80) was produced by Stanley, ‘Judgment of the Damned,’ 363–91.

33 Ibid., 49–50.

35 For a more detailed list of Rogationtide rituals, see Vercelli XIX, which is also untitled in the manuscript, but which is rubricated as *FERIA II IN LETANIA MAIORE* in Scragg's MS **P** in CCC 162 (215–19), and *FERIA II [SERMO] IN LETANIA MAIORE* (in Scragg's MSS **GH**, where **H** has the expanded reading). See appendix 1 below (280–6) for more details.

36 For an overview of Rogationtide practices, see *Rogationtide*, xv–xxv.

37 The Pembroke sources for Vercelli XXI are as follows: item 90 (fol. 168r): *Predicatio de principibus et populis* ; item 91 (fol. 170r): *Predicatio bona omnibus Christianis* ; Item 34 (fol. 79v): *Item alia de Resurrectione Domini* ; Item 24 (fol. 48r): *Omelia in Dominica iiii in Quadragesima* ; item 39 (fol. 90r): no title; item 50 (fol. 117v, actually labelled as item XLXI): *Omelia in Passione Sancti Iohannis Baptiste* ; item 25 (fol. 50v): *Omelia in Dominica V in Quadragesima* ; Item 48 (fol. 111v): *Item alia de Sapientia* ; item 40 (fol. 91r): *Oportet nos*. For these identifications, see *Pembroke*, 143–73.

38 Paul E. Szarmach was the first to note the parallels between Vercelli XXI and Caesar-ius of Arles's *sermones* 158 and 199 (in his ed., *Vercelli Homilies IX–XXIII*, 88). James E. Cross, however, subsequently questioned the link with *sermo* 158, arguing that the passage in Vercelli XXI may just as easily have been derived from biblical sources (see *Pembroke*, 144–6). Szarmach also originally argued that Paulinus of Aquileia's *Liber Exhortationis*, ch. 23 was the source of Vercelli XXI.45–67, but he has since shown the precedent Latin text to be an earlier version of the text found in *Pembroke* 25, item 77 (in his 'Two Notes on the Vercelli Homilies,' *ELN* 24.2 [1986]: 3–7).

39 Wright, 'More Old English Poetry.' Also see McIntosh, 'Wulfstan's Prose,' and Stanley, 'The Judgment of the Damned.'

40 Stanley, 'The Judgment of the Damned,' 363–91.

⁴¹ McIntosh, 'Wulfstan's Prose,' 141.

- 42 The poem has now been anthologized in Madeleine Bergman, 'Supplement to A Concordance to the Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records,' *Mediaevalia* 8 (1982): 9–52, at 15, as cited by Wright, 'More Old English Poetry,' 252–3 n. 30.

⁴³ See especially Wright, 'More Old English Poetry,' 254 [text] and 255–62 [discussion].

44 Since I am following Wright's emended text, I use his translation here ('More Old English Verse,' 255).

45 Ibid., 261.

46 See below, 113–16.

⁴⁷ See first McIntosh, 'Wulfstan's Prose,' 130 n. 7, and also Leslie Whitbread, 'Two Notes on Minor Old English Poems,' *SN* 20 (1949): 192–8 (also cited by Wright, 'More Old English Poetry,' 252 n. 31). The same passage is preserved in the homily contained in Scragg's MS **Xd** (*VH*, 347).

48 Fred C. Robinson, ed., *The Editing of Old English* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 180–95.

49 ASPR VI, *An Exhortation to Christian Living*, 67–9.

50 The manuscript reads *wis`se* at this point, leading Scragg to suggest that the Vercelli homilist is copying too slavishly from his supposed source, which Scragg takes to be *Exhortation*. But see below, 81–91.

51 *Pembroke*, 149–51.

52 Wright, 'More Old English Poetry,' 252 n. 33.

53 For some relative dating strategies based on metre, see R.D. Fulk, *A History of Old English Meter* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992). For the testing of the same through an examination of formulas, see, for example, Andy Orchard's investigation of the Old English poems *Elene* and *Judith*, in which he suggests that the *Judith* poet is borrowing directly from Cynewulf's *Elene* in 'Computing Cynewulf: the *Judith* -Connection,' in *Medieval Manuscripts at Notre Dame*, ed. Jill Mann and Maura Nolan (South Bend, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2005), 75–106. On the same with respect to prose, see the discussion below (236–7), concerning the relative chronology of the Guthlac homily in Vercelli XXIII and the prose life contained in BL, Cotton Vespasian D. xxi (fols. 18–40).

54 For the most recent discussion of the application of these tests to Vercelli II and XXI, see *VH*, 348 n. 3.

55 Zacher, 'Rewards,' 83–108. Also see, for example, the numerous treatments of this poem by Leslie Whitbread in 'The Old English *Exhortation to Christian Living* : Some Textual Problems,' *MLR* 44 (1949): 178–83, and 'Notes on the Old English *Exhortation to Christian Living*,' *SN* 23 (1951): 96–102. Other treatments include Thomas A. Bredehoft, 'A Note on Robinson's *Rewards of Piety*,' *N&Q* 45.1 (1998): 5–8; and Caie, 'Text and Context,' 155–62.

56 Eduard Sievers, *Altgermanische Metrik* (Niemeyer: Halle, 1893) and McIntosh, 'Wulfstan's Prose,' 110. Examples of lines with 'imperfect' alliteration include lines 2 ('gif þu wille þæt blowende rice gestigan'), 9 ('godes and manna and seo ælmessylen'); 11 ('þæt he þine synna adwæscan wylle'), 25 ('ne mihtu mid þæm eallum sawwle þine'), 56 ('gyltas þine swiðe bemurnan'), 66 ('sawwle þine; a hi winnað') and 73 ('hu þu þæt ece leoht æfre begytan mæge'). See further Zacher, 'Rewards,' 95.

57 A full list of stray half-lines, compiled from the *ASPR* edition, is as follows: 12 ('and eac oþera fela'), 39 ('gif he him god ne ondræt'), 46 ('þa man mæg mid fæstenum') and 67 ('embe þæt'). This list cannot be definitive, however, since it is ultimately unclear whether these lines should be read as hypermetric or hypometric verse; the ambiguity arises from the fact that they may be taken either as widowed half-lines, or (as Bliss has argued elsewhere in relation to gnomic verse) as extensions of the surrounding 'regular' verse. See further A.J. Bliss, 'Single Half-Lines in Old English Poetry,' *N&Q* 18 (1971): 442–9; and Zacher, 'Rewards,' 96.

58 See Thomas A. Bredehoft, *Early English Metre* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 79–80.

59 For a fuller list of these words, see Zacher, 'Rewards,' 89–90.

60 According to the *DOE*, the compound *ælmessyllen* appears a total of twenty-one times, *cyricsocn* nineteen times. *Dyrne(ge)liger* - appears in multiple forms as an adjective once, a noun twenty-eight times (not counting those with the final element *-scip*), an adverb once, and a verb six times. By my own count, *oferfyll* - appears over 90 times in the corpus, but only this once in poetry. It is perhaps noteworthy that the term *ælmessyllen* appears with special frequency in Vercelli XIX–XXI, where clear clusters appear in Vercelli XIX.162, XX.32, 33, 35, and 42 (the first two from XX appearing in the above quotation, and the variant passage in Napier XXX), and XXI.37, 45, 46, 149, not to mention the further saturation of simplex and compound forms of *ælmesse* (including the compounds *ælmesgeorn*, *ælmesdæd*) that appear throughout these three homilies.

61 It may also be possible to detect a parallel between *Exhortation* 8–11, which connects almsgiving with the extinguishing of sins (in the sequence *forðan... manna... seo ælmessylen... synna... adwæscan*), and Vercelli XX.32–4: *‘forþan seo ælmessylen alyst þone synfullan mann fram synnum 7 fram deaþe, 7 swa swa wæter adwæscit fyr, swa adwæscit seo ælmessylen þa synna of manna gehwylcum þe h[y] rumodlice dæleð’* (*‘because almsgiving frees the sinful man from sins and from death; and just as water extinguishes fire, so almsgiving extinguishes the sins of all men who generously give it out’*). As Scragg has shown in his edition of Vercelli XX, these lines clearly draw upon a Latin source, best paralleled in Pembroke 25, item 52, where it states that (quoting *VH*, 333 nn. 23–6.) *‘quia aelimosina a peccato et a morte liberat et sicut aqua extinguit ignem ita aelimosina emundat peccata’* (*‘because almsgiving frees from sin and from death; and just as water extinguishes water, so almsgiving purifies sins’*). The Latin is furthermore indebted to two biblical quotations, from Tobias 4:11 (*‘quoniam elemosyna ab omni peccato et a morte liberat et non patietur animam ire in tenebras’*; *‘for alms deliver from all sin, and from death, and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness’*; trans. Douay Rheims) and Sirach 3:33 (*‘ignem ardentem extinguit aqua et elemosyna resistit peccatis’*; *‘water quenqueth a flaming fire, and alms resisteth sins’*; trans. Douay Rheims). While the passage in *Exhortation* does not contain an analogous figure comparing almsgiving to the quenching of fire, it employs the same general language of extinguishing sin. The fact that the collocation *ælm - ... adwæsc - ... syn-* appears with some frequency in Old English prose (appearing in prose at least 14 more times, though only once in verse in the appropriately named short poem *Almsgiving*, line 5) makes it difficult to claim a direct link with Vercelli XX. A small sampling of these references include (using short titles from the on-line *DOE* corpus; exceptions include poetry and the homilies derived from Vercelli; *Blickling*; *CHI*; *CHII*; *ÆHom*; *Wulfstan*; and Napier, as these always follow my list of abbreviations): the short poem *Almsgiving*, line 5; *CHII.7 First Sunday in Lent*; *ÆHom* 8, line 298; an anonymous homily for the Third Sunday after Epiphany (HomS 5 Willard [B3.2.5], line 88); an anonymous homily for *In Letania maiore* (from Bodleian MS Hatton 114; HomS 32 Baz-Cr [B3.2.32], line 70). It is therefore simply to be noted here that the same conflation of passages appears in Vercelli XX.32 and XXI.46–7, where in the latter homily the topos of the extinguishing water is replaced by more general discussion of how provisions for the poor literally slake their thirst. Scragg points out this connection between Vercelli XX and XXI in *VH*, 353 nn. 46–7.

63 The collocations *æt ... slæp ... wæt* appears in the following texts (using the short titles from the on-line Corpus): *Benedictine Rule* (BenR [B10.3.1.1] ch. 49, p. 76, line 13); *Winteneý Version of the Benedictine Rule* (BenRW [B10.3.4] ch. 49, p. 101, line 31). It is perhaps also noteworthy that the two extant variant texts of Vercelli XX (represented as Scragg's MSS **GH**) contain illegible readings for the item in the collocation (precisely where Vercelli XX has *wæt*es and *Exhortation* has *slæpes*), though the breakdown in the prose transmission may, of course, be entirely incidental to the poem.

64 *ASPR* VI records no caesura since the line is metrically imperfect.

65 Examples include (using abbreviations from the on-line corpus where necessary): *Wulfstan* 13, line 65; Napier XXXV, line 42; an anonymous homily beginning with *Geherað nu mæn ða leofestan hu us godes bec* (HomM 5 Willard [B3.5.5], line 46); an anonymous homily beginning ‘Leofa man þe is mycel þearf þæt ðu þas drihtenlican tide georne geþence’ (HomM 10 [B3.5.10], line 53); the law code known as *Æthelred VIIa* (LawVIIaAtr [B14.25] 5.1); and where *cyrice* and *socn* appear in editions as separate elements, see also Vercelli XII.12–16; Napier XXIX, line 3; an anonymous homily for Second Sunday in Lent (ed. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 114) HomS 12 [B3.2.12], line 119); a homily for Tuesday in Rogationtide (HomS 37 Baz-Cr [B3.2.37], line 99); an anonymous homily beginning with ‘Ic eow bidde 7 eadmodlice lære, þæt ge þis halige lāngtenfāsten rihtlice healdan, mid ælmessum’ (HomM 7 KerTibC 1 [B3.5.7], line 1).

66 Wright also points out the neglect of these lines in his 'More Old English Poetry,' 253.

67 See above, 82 n. 57.

68 The passage in Vercelli XXI also shares with *Exhortation* its mission to teach about good living ('Ði we eow lærað'), a directive echoed in the opening lines of the poem ('Nu lære ic þe'). The language in the remainder of the passage in Vercelli XXI reflects a more complicated intermixture of generic influences. For example, it seems possible to detect at least one alliterative collocation *earm* -... *eadig* - (appearing twice in the above passage), which occurs elsewhere in poetry: in *Christ III*, lines 1497, 1553, *Maxims 1*, line 37, *Judgment Day II*, line 163, and *The Nine Herb Charm*, line 40. This 'poetic' language is counterbalanced by collocations that appear predominantly in Old English prose, such as *æ fste... a ndan*, or the phrase 'for Gode ȝ for worulde,' which was a well-known favourite of the later homilist Wulfstan. However brief the parallel with *Exhortation*, what the homily again demonstrates is a heightened sensitivity to register and rhythm beyond that which has been previously attested.

69 See Leslie Whitbread, 'Notes on Two Minor Old English Poems,' *SN* 29 (1957): 123–9 at 126, and Caie, ed., *Judgment Day II*, 16–17. Both argue verbal and thematic connections with the *Confessional of Egbert*. See also my 'Rewards,' 87–8 for more context.

70 On the possible links between prosimetrum in the Vercelli homilies and the rhythmic styles of Ælfric and Wulfstan, see above, xxvi and 55–6.

71 See *VH*, 48. Scragg, however, shows that occasionally Vercelli XXI can be used to correct Vercelli II.15, 54, 58, 59, and 71, though cautions that these 'improvements' may represent modernizations.

73 Scragg, 'Dunstan's Day,' 191–2.

74 Ibid., 191.

⁷⁵ For a discussion of this collocation as it occurs in *Judgment Day II*, see Graham D. Caie, ed., *Judgment Day II*, 78.

76 For a discussion of these polarities, see Thomas D. Hill, 'The Tropological Context of Heat and Cold Imagery in Anglo-Saxon Poetry,' *NM* 69 (1968): 522–32.

77 Cf. the use of a parallel motif of expulsion in Vercelli X.102–10, as discussed below, 113–16.

78 A list of these catalogues in poetry and prose appears in Hildegard L.C. Tristram, 'Stock Descriptions of Heaven and Hell in Old English Prose and Poetry,' *NM* 79 (1978): 102–13. Also see David F. Johnson, 'The Five Horrors of Hell: An Insular Homiletic Motif,' *ES* 74 (1993): 414–31.

79 See (the CH versions of) Wærferth's translation in H. Hecht, ed., *Bischof Wærferths von Worcester Uebersetzung der Dialoge Gregors des Grossen*, Bib. ags. Prosa 5 (Leipzig and Hamburg; repr. Darmstadt 1965), ch. 9, p. 70, line 25. Also cf. the *DOE* entry for *ǣ-prīstian*, vb., wk. 2 (for which it cites only these two occurrences), and the *DOE* entry for *ǣ-þēostrian*, *ǣ-þýstrian*, vb., wk. 2 (for which it cites ca. 110 occurrences).

80 *VH*, 56 and his note for line 26 in *VH*, 67.

81 *ASPR* V, 184.

82 For examples in which the idiom applies to the physical condition of blindness, see for instance (using short titles from the on-line *DOE* Corpus where appropriate): the anonymous *Life of St Pantaleon* (LS 30 Pantaleon [B3.3.30], line 80); *Old English Translation of Boethius's Consolation of Philosophy* (Bo [B9.3.2] ch. 38, p. 121, line 14); *Wærferth's Translation of Gregory the Great Dialogues* (GDPref and 3 C [B9.5.5] ch. 2, p. 18, line 17); Old English Translation of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, book 4 (Bede 4 [B9.6.6] ch. 13, p. 292, line 16). A particularly vivid example can be found in *CHI*.8, line 9, where Ælfric cites both uses of this idiom: 'Ða yttran þeostru sind þæs lichaman blindnyssa wiðutan; þa inran þeostru sind þæs modes blindnyssa wiðinnan' ('the outer darknesses are the blindnesses of the body without; the inner darknesses are the blindnesses of the spirit within').

83 Caie, ed., *Judgment Day II*, 90.

84 For an example in which the noun *cirm* represents ‘human’ utterance, see *Genesis A*, line 2549a, where a *cirm arleasra* (‘outcry of the wicked’) describes the lament of the *laðan cynnes* (‘hateful people’; line 2550a) in Gomorrah. Likewise, in *Andreas*, lines 41b–2a, we are told of a ‘*cirm micel / geond Mermedonia*’ (‘a great cry throughout Mermedonia’) at Matthew’s approach. There are also parallels in Doomsday materials. In *Christ II*, line 835a, for example, we are told of the *cirm* of ‘*þa þe hyra weorcum wace truwiað*’ (‘those who trust weakly in their works’; line 837). See further Haruko Momma, ‘Old English *cirm* and *cirman* : Can a Sound Change Affect a Semantic Change?’ *English Literature in Hokkaido* 35 (1990): 87–96.

85 For an occasion in which the verb *granian* may describe ‘human’ lamentation, see Vercelli XXII.191–2. The passage explains the fate of the sinful who will not repent: ‘We graniað þonne, 7 ne bið se ðe ure gemiltsie’ (‘we will groan then, and there will not be anyone who will show us mercy’). See also Napier XLVII 245/2–3, in which the rhyme *graniað* and *waniað* highlights the corruption of the sinners: ‘ðonne granjað and wanjað þa, þe her blissedon and fægnedon’ (‘then they will groan and wane, those who here rejoiced and celebrated’).

86 The items in Vercelli II are as follows: **1. murder, 2. sin, 3. pride, 4. envy, 5. vain boasting, 6. unrighteousness, 7. fornication, 8. breaking fasts early, 9. drunkenness, 10. folly,** 11. magical arts, **12. avarice,** 13. greed, 14. deceit, 15. hypocrisy, 16. slander, 17. double-speech, 18. acts of strife, 19. wicked thoughts, 20. miserly acts, **21. all the customs that the devils established in themselves.**

87 The items in Vercelli XXI are as follows: **1. murder, 2. sin, 3. pride, 4. envy, 5. vain boasting, 6. unrighteousness, 7. fornication, 8. breaking fasts early, 9. drunkenness, 10. folly**, 11. greed, **12. avarice**, 13. deceit, 14. hypocrisy, 15. slander, 16. acts of strife, 17. wicked thoughts, 18. magical arts, 19. double-speech, **20. all the customs that the devils established in themselves**. Scragg points out the closeness of the first part of the catalogue in Vercelli XXI.220–2 to that in Vercelli XX.23–6 in *VH*, 333 nn. 23–6.

88 See the catalogue appearing in Scragg's MS L (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 115, fols. 140–7), the relevant portions of which he prints alongside his edition of Vercelli II.69–73 (*VH*, 58 and 60). The catalogue in MS L appears in the middle of its version of Vercelli IX, and is the only extant copy of the homily to contain this list (see further *VH*, 49 n. 6). The version of the homily in manuscript N (CCCC 419 and 421 [lines 98–102]) (printed in *VH*, 61) also contains a variant version of this list. Both homilies, however, appear to postdate Vercelli II and XXI.

89 See the discussion above, 71–2, concerning the antithesis created by the presence of these catalogues in Vercelli XXI.

90 See Wright, 'Vercelli Homilies XI–XIII,' 213–14, who argues that the homilist of Vercelli XII meticulously omits ascetic and monastic virtues from a list of vices derived ultimately from Cassian's *De institutis coenobiorum* to best suit a non-monastic (and perhaps secular-clerical) audience.

- 91 The exception in this portion of the catalogue is the appearance of *fremfulle* in Vercelli XXI.235 where Vercelli II.110 presents *fremsume*. For further examples in which the homilist expands an item, see Vercelli XXI.159, in which the adverb *egesfullic* presents an expanded form of *egeslic* in Vercelli II.1, and Vercelli XXI.160, where *ondrysenlic* presents a variant for *andryslie* in Vercelli II.2, and again in Vercelli XXI.167, where *ondrysenlicu* presents an alternative for *ondryslie* in Vercelli II.8–9.

92 1. willing to learn, 2. virtuous, 3. obedient to God and our lords, 4. patient for the will of God.

93 1. peaceable, 2. gentle, 3. patient, 4. humble, 5. virtuous, 6. each of us obedient to the other in good things.

95 Catalogue 10 [5], as it appears in Vercelli XXI, also introduces text. The item *geþwære* ('gentle') occurs elsewhere in catalogue 12 as one of the fourteen types of blessed who are able to enter heaven (XXI.249–52). Though this is the only other occurrence of the word in the homily, 'gentleness' is an important quality all throughout the text. In catalogue 3 (XXI.48–56), for example, *liðnes* or 'softness' is listed as one of *Godes wegas* ('ways of God'), just as in the first catalogue enumerating eighteen attributes of the Lord, we find an emphasis upon such temperate attributes as *hiht* ('hope'; XXI.5), *frofer* ('comfort'; XXI.6), *bliss* ('bliss'; XXI.7), and *sybb* ('peace'; XXI.8). This portrayal of a gentle God presents a stark contrast to the stern God of Judgment Day presented in the portions common to Vercelli II and XXI.

96 Though the immediate source for the quotation is the St Père homiliary, the ultimate source is biblical, from Mk 12:30–1. As Scragg demonstrates (*VH*, 363 nn. 1–4), the interpolated explanatory phrase ‘þæt syndon ealle cristene menn,’ which is inserted into the above quotation, has also been added to variants for Vercelli III (Scragg’s MS **EFGI.8**) and IX (Scragg’s MS **L.7**).

97 See, for example, the Vercelli poem *Soul and Body I*, lines 112–26, which describe the rending of the corpse by worms. The passage may also be reminiscent of Mt 24:12, which states that ‘quoniam abundabit iniquitas refrigescet caritas multorum’ (‘love cools because the sins of many grow abundant’). Wulfstan uses this theme at least three times, in homilies V.97–9, III.55, and XX.61–3 (*Wulfstan*, 292 nn. 98–9).

98 See above, 72–3.

99 Examples of the phrase ‘light without darkness’ occur in the Vercelli manuscript three other times, in V.201, XIX.174, and XX.200, and indeed in a multitude of contexts outside the Vercelli Book. The reverse doublet ‘darkness without light’ may, of course, also occur in Judgment Day contexts, as in the *Interrogationes Sigeuulfi in Genesin* (ÆIntSig [B1.6.1] section 47, line 312).

100 Though the topos of the departure of light is common in Doomsday settings, it is somewhat rare to find a discussion of the light of three elements, of the sun, the moon, *and* the stars. These elements are usually found together in accounts of God's creation of the world. For example: *Christ II*, line 606–7a; *CHI.11*, line 102; Ælfric, *De falsis diis*, *ÆHom* 22, line 181; Ælfric, *De temporibus anni* (*Ætemp* [B1.9.4] chapter 3.7, and 4.21–4); *Alfred's translation of Boethius's Consolation of Philosophy* (Bo [B9.3.2] ch. 30, p. 69, line 21); *Alfred's translation of Augustine's Soliloquies* (Solil 1 [B9.4.2] p. 9, line 9); *Wulfstan*, V.105–7. The Exeter poem *Daniel* 374b–6b presents an interesting variation on this theme because the three youths in the fire employ collocations traditionally found in Judgment Day contexts in order to praise God's creations. For example, the youths state: 'Niht somod and dæg, / and þec landa gehwilc, leoht and þeostro, / herige on hade, somod hat and ceald!' ('night and day together, and every land, light and darkness, let them praise [you] in degree, hot and cold together!').

102 For a discussion of these formulas, see Tristram, 'Stock Descriptions,' 102–4, where it is demonstrated that the 'ultimate source' for this type of catalogue can be found in the Apocalypse of John 7:16 and 21:4.

103 See, Tristram, *ibid.*, and the examples she cites in relation to *CHI*.19 XIX and Napier XXIX.

104 See *Pembroke*, 6–55.

107 Gatch, 'Eschatology,' 154.

108 The term 'envelope pattern' refers, as Adeline Bartlett demonstrates, to the repetition of words, ideas, or phrases to create rhetorical and structural units. Bartlett, *Larger Rhetorical Patterns*, 9.

109 See Colette Stévanovitch, 'Envelope Patterns in *Genesis A and B*,' *Neophilologus* 80 (1996): 465–78, and 'Envelope Patterns and the Unity of the Old English Christ and Satan,' *ASNSL* 233 (1996): 260–7.

111 See Pasternack, *Textuality*, 133 n. 30.

¹¹² See too the analysis of this theme in relation to Vercelli XXII, below 147, 158, and 172.

113 For a further discussion of this battle, see below, 231, 238, 247–73.

114 Francis M. Clough, 'Introduction,' in *The Vercelli Homilies : Translations from the Anglo-Saxon*, ed. Lewis E. Nicholson (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991), 1–15, at 10. I have substituted Vercelli 'XX' for 'it' in brackets.

115 Szarmach, 'Style and Structure,' 252.

116 The term derives from Hill, 'Reform and Resistance,' 41 and 46, who uses it in a similar context.

117 See the discussion of poetic influences in Vercelli XXI and X, above, see 76–91 and 113–16.

- 1 Malcolm Godden has most recently challenged King Alfred's authorship of this preface to Augustine's *Soliloquies* (and indeed that of other prose translations generally attributed to him) in 'Did King Alfred Write Anything?' *MÆ* 76 (2007): 1–23.

- 2 For a recent treatment of this preface, together with newly discovered biblical parallels, see Valerie Heuchan, 'God's Co-Workers and Powerful Tools: A Study of the Sources of Alfred's Building Metaphor in His Old English Translation of Augustine's Soliloquies,' *N&Q* 54 (2007): 1–11.

- 3 Thomas A. Carnicelli, ed., *King Alfred's Version of St. Augustine's Soliloquies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 47.1–6.

- ⁴ See further Donald G. Scragg, 'Source Study,' in *Reading Old English Texts*, ed. Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 39–58, who uses the same metaphor to illuminate the relationship of Old English texts to their sources.

- 5 An abbreviated version of this chapter appears in 'Sin, Syntax, and Synonyms: Rhetorical Style and Structure in Vercelli Homily X,' *JEGP* 103 (2004): 53–76. Since the submission of this article, several relevant and important treatments of Vercelli X and its sources have emerged, including those by Claudia Di Sciacca: 'Il topos dell'ubi sunt nell'omiletica anglosassone: Il caso di Vercelli X,' in *I germani e gli altri: 3. Seminario avanzato in filologia germanica*, ed. Vittoria Dolcetti Corazza and Renato Gendre, Bibliotheca Germanica 13 (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso Alessandria, 2003), 225–55, and 'The *Ubi Sunt* Motif and the Soul-and-Body Legend in Old English Homilies: Sources and Relationships,' *JEGP* (2006): 365–87; and Hussey, 'Ascetics and Aesthetics.' Jane Roberts also treats Vercelli X twice in her 'Guthlac of Crowland and the Seals of the Cross,' in *The Place of the Cross in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Catherine E. Karkov, Sarah Larratt Keefer, and Karen Louise Jolly, Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies (Wood-bridge, UK ; Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2006), 113–28; and 'What Did Anglo-Saxon Seals Seal When?' in *The Power of Words: Essays in Lexicography, Lexicology and Semantics in Honour of Christian J. Kay*, ed. Graham D. Caie, Carole Hough, and Irené Wotherspoon, Costerus New Series 163 (Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, 2006), 131–57. I have also in this chapter incorporated more fully the findings of Paul E. Szarmach in 'A Return to Cotton Tiberius A.iii, Art. 24,' in *Text and Gloss: Studies in Insular Language and Literature Presented to Joseph Donovan Pheifer*, ed. Helen Conrad O'Briain, Anne Marie D'Arcy, and John Scattergood (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), 166–81.

- 6 Assessments of the homily's structure and style have been made by Lynn Louise Remly McCabe in 'An Edition and Translation of a Tenth-Century Anglo-Saxon Homily, Vercelli X (Codex CXVII)' (unpublished PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1968), 23–47, and 'Ars Praedicandi : Poetic Devices in the Prose Homily Vercelli X,' *Mid-Hudson Language Studies* 1 (1978): 1–16; Jonathan Wilcox, 'Variant Texts of an Old English Homily: Vercelli X and Stylistic Readers,' in *The Preservation and Transmission of Anglo-Saxon Culture*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach and Joel T. Rosenthal (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University Press, 1997), 335–51; and Orchard, 'Re-Reading *The Wanderer*,' 1–26, at 20–5.

- 7 The complete homily exists in three manuscripts: Vercelli, Biblioteca Capitolare CXVII (fols. 65r18–71r10), CCC 302 (221–30), and CCC 421 (170–208). The homily exists either in part or as an excerpt elsewhere in CCC 302 (78–83), as well as in Princeton, University Library, W.H. Scheide Collection 71 (fols. 63v–5r) [*Blickling* IX], Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 85 (fol. 2r); Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 343 (fols. 164rv) [Irvine VII]; BL, Cotton Faustina A.ix (fols. 27v–31v); and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 113 (fols. 73r–80v) [Napier XXX]. For further manuscript details, see Scragg, *VH*, 191–5, and Wilcox, ‘Variant Texts,’ 335–51. Elaine Treharne provides a facing-page text and translation in *Old and Middle English: An Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 99–107.

- 8 Szarmach, 'Vercelli Prose,' forthcoming. I follow Szarmach in calling the author of our text the 'Vercelli homilist,' though the homily is likely copied from a previous exemplar now lost.

- 9 The line references for the sourced material are different from those cited in the preceding list because these numbers account for vernacular materials added to the sources.

10 *VH*, 191. This section is only found in the version of the text surviving in the Vercelli manuscript, and Scragg considers it a late addition. As Scragg notes (*ibid.*), ‘This introductory material has no known source, and is so full of the rhetorical figures familiar in eschatological homilies (e.g. lists of near synonyms, repetitive syntax, simple metaphors, alliteration and rhyme) that one suspects that it was composed as an introduction to the present piece.’ I read these lines differently, and will be suggesting that in fact this opening section is extremely well integrated into the structure of the homily as a whole. See below, 119–20.

- 11 The version in the homily is much altered and made more dramatic. Christ's response to the devil (not found in Paulinus) is cobbled from Christ's rejection of sinners in Mt 25:41 and 46; see below, 113–14.

12 PL 99.271–2. Paulinus of Aquileia's *Liber exhortationis ad Henricum comitem* was not widely consulted or cited by Anglo-Saxon authors. According to the *Fontes* database, it appears as a source for only one other Anglo-Saxon text, namely the Rogationtide homily in Hatton 114, fols. 105v–11r, lines 27–35 and 80–4 [Homily X, *Rogationtide*, 125–35]. Though Szarmach originally argued that the *Liber exhortationis* chap. 23 was likewise a direct source for Vercelli XXI.45–67 (see his ed., *Vercelli Homilies IX–XXIII*), in a subsequent publication, Szarmach demonstrated the precedent Latin text to be an earlier version of the text witnessed in *Pembroke* 25 item 77 ('Two Notes,' 3–7). For further commentary on the use of this source in Napier XLIV, a variant text of Vercelli X, see Joan Turville-Petre, 'Translations of a Lost Penitential Homily,' *Traditio* 19 (1963): 51–78 at 61.

- 13 PL 39.2340–2. The Vercelli homilist appears to follow a version of the text similar to that preserved in MS Salisbury, Cathedral Library 9. According to *Fontes*, the particular version of the pseudo-Augustinian sermon used in Vercelli X occurs nowhere else as a source in the extant Old English corpus; however, the sermon is also preserved in a different version, in Salisbury, Cathedral Library 179, and this rendering is used as a source for *CHII*.7. Also see *VH*, 192 n. 1.

14 PL 83.865. For the extant Anglo-Saxon manuscripts containing Isidore's *Synonyma*, see *Handlist*, nos. 114, 363e, 392, 415, 461, 752, 845, and 946. For additional evidence of the circulation of the *Synonyma*, see Lapidge, 'Surviving Booklists,' 87–167, and especially his reference to Æthelwold's booklist at 53. Lapidge elsewhere demonstrates (*Anglo-Saxon Library*, 80) that no fewer than five copies of Isidore's *Synonyma* (ibid., 157–70, nos. 19, 76, 82, 84, 96) were cited among the manuscripts surviving from the Anglo-Saxon mission in Germany, thus apparently attesting both to the fittingness of the text for the ethos of the mission and, since the manuscripts were produced in England, to their general importance in eighth-century Anglo-Saxon libraries. Lapidge also significantly points out that the *Synonyma* (together with Isidore's *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, *De natura rerum*, and *Etymologiae*) numbers among only a 'small core of staple patristic texts, scarcely exceeding twenty titles' that was housed in the 'typical Anglo-Saxon library' (*Anglo-Saxon Library*, 127).

- 15 The intersection with Alcuin's work may be more than circumstantial, since Paulinus served among the coterie of scholars associated with Charlemagne, and was a close friend and correspondent of Alcuin (*Rogationtide*, 125).

16 Cf. Vercelli XXII, discussed in [chapter 5](#) below, which incorporates (with considerable freedom) this dialogic scheme. *Fontes* records the *Synonyma* as a source for just two other texts, in the Charter known as Sawyer 190, and Irvine, Homily VII.

17 The manuscripts of the *Synonyma* containing Old English glosses are as follows: London, BL, Cotton Vespasian D. XIV, fols. 170–224 at 214v–16v, with a possible provenance in Christ Church Canterbury, s. ix1/4 [*Handlist*, item 392]; London, BL, Harley 110, fols. 25–53, at 51r–2r, s. x ex. from Christ Church Canterbury [*Handlist*, 415]; and Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M.p.th.f.79, with an origin in the south of England or Mercia, and provenance Germany, Rhine-Main area, s. viii [*Handlist*, 946]. Furthermore, the copies in Harley 110, and in another manuscript (which contains only Latin glosses) in CCCC 448, are compiled together with other school texts (see Hussey, ‘Ascetics and Aesthetics,’ 25). Szarmach collates some of these Old English glosses as *comparanda* for his edition of *Warna*, an Old English text containing a translation of excerpts from the *Synonyma*, found in London, BL, Cotton Tiberius A.iii, art. 24, 102r19–3r24. See below, 129–37 for a discussion of this text.

18 On the evidence for use of the *Synonyma* as a school text from the time of the seventh-century Canterbury school of Theodore of Tarsus, until the eleventh century, under the tutelage of Ælfric Bata, see especially Hussey, 'Ascetics and Aesthetics,' 77–318. It has also been suggested that the *Synonyma* was used as a compendium of materials geared for the encouragement of repentance and good living; see Hussey, 'Ascetics and Aesthetics,' 27, who highlights this type of 'moralized' adaptation by Defensor of Ligugé, in his *Liber scintillarum* (ca. 700).

- 19 The primary corpus of Anglo-Saxon texts containing the *ubi sunt* topos was identified by James E. Cross, “‘Ubi Sunt’ Passages in Old English-Sources and Relationships,” *Vetenskaps-Societeten i Lund Årsbok* (1956): 23–44. For the discussion of a previously uncited *ubi sunt* passage see Andy Orchard, ‘Artful Alliteration in Anglo-Saxon Song and Story,’ *Anglia* 113 (1995): 429–63. For a comprehensive review of the relationship between these passages, and their derivation from disparate sources (including most importantly Isidore’s *Synonyma* and Caesarius of Arles’s *Sermo de elemosinus*) see Di Sciacca, ‘Il topos dell’ubi sunt’ and ‘The *Ubi Sunt* Motif.’ On the further connection between soul-and-body debates and the *ubi sunt* topos, see also Takami Matsuda, ‘The *Ubi Sunt* Passages in Middle English Literature,’ *Studies in English Literature* 59 (1983): 65–81 at 73 and 80.

20 Though God is mentioned explicitly in Vercelli X.56, and in the context of this Doomsday scene, it states explicitly in X.101–2 that it is the *hælend*, usually identified with Christ, who is the recipient of the devil's bold speech. Furthermore, the speech at lines 92–100 addressed the Creator (*scippend*) as the same divinity who suffered the crucifixion ('þu þe sylf on rode astige'; 'you yourself climbed up on the cross'; Vercelli X.94–5). Given the apparent interchangeability of these figures, I will use the designator Christ.

21 The layout is mine, adapted from Trahern's arrangement for the variants found in CCCC 302 and 421. See Trahern, 'Old English Verse Paraphrase,' 109.

22 McCabe, 'Vercelli X,' 38–9, notes the first four references, and Trahern, 'Old English Verse Paraphrase,' 110–12, provides the final three. To these references, one might add *Christ and Satan*, lines 68, 119–20, 184–5, 295, and 341–3.

[23](#) See Trahern, 'Old English Verse Paraphrase,' 113 n. 9.

24 For a discussion of this phenomenon, see Orchard, 'Artful Alliteration,' 431.

25 This kind of substitution of rhyme and near-rhyme for regular-line alliteration is arguably characteristic of late Old English poetry. Though the matter remains controversial, Bredehoft has recently articulated the use of this feature as a means of attaining metrical resolution; see further his *Early English Metre*, 57–9. For examples of this phenomenon in Old English poetry, see Caie, ed., *Judgment Day II*, 55–7 and Zacher, ‘Rewards,’ 83–108.

26 The Latin text is cited from *VH*, 206.

27 The parallel poetic technique is the 'appositive style' described most fully by Fred C. Robinson, *'Beowulf' and the Appositive Style*, John C. Hodges Lectures Series (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985).

28 *VH*, 199 nn. 67–75.

29 For a discussion of the devil as a musician in the Vercelli Book, see Christina M. Heckman, 'The Sweet Song of Satan: Music and Resistance in the Vercelli Book,' *Essays in Medieval Studies* 15 (1999): 57–70.

30 The devil appears as an accuser in several Latin texts, for which see McCabe, 'Vercelli X,' 6–7; and Karl Jost, ed., *Wulfstanstudien*, Schweizer Anglistische Arbeiten 23 (Bern: Francke, 1950), 246–7.

31 See especially Vercelli X.58–61, which asserts that earthly treasures are futile in heaven, and X.220–31 (drawn from Isidore), which discusses the vanity of riches and opulent dress.

32 Occurrences of this word-group are as follows: 6: *gehyreð* ; 9: *gehyrdon* ; [29: *gehyrdon*]; 73: *gehyran* ; 78: *hyrnesse* ; 81: *gehyrdon* ; 83: *gehyran* ; 84: *gehyrdon* ; 86: *hyrdon* ; 100: *mishyrnesse* ; 101: *gehyrdon* ; 109: *gehyred* ; 115: *gehyrsumnesse* ; 129: [*gehyre*]; 135: *gehyrdest* ; 135: *gehyrde* ; 140: *gehyreð* ; 140: *gehyran* ; 174: *ahyrde* ; 249: *gehyre* ; 270: *gehyred* ; 271: *gehyrnes*.

33 Scragg notes the use of passages from Lk 12.16–21 as a framing device; see *VH*, 215 n. 122.

34 For a discussion of the use of triads as a structuring device in Old English literature, see Wright, *The Irish Tradition*, 79–88.

35 For a discussion of the three-hosts motif as it occurs in Old English texts, see Malcolm Godden, 'An Old English Penitential Motif,' *ASE* 2 (1973): 221–39. See also Wright, *Irish Tradition*, 85–8, and Andrew Breeze, 'The Three Hosts of Doomsday in Celtic and Old English,' *Miscelánea* 15 (1994): 71–9.

36 Scragg, *VH*, 206–7, construes the first line of this passage as two sentences. This rendering does not take into account the rhetorical structure of the *tricolon abundans*.

38 As in a passage from *The Old English Version of the Enlarged Rule of Chrodegang Together With the Latin Original*, ed. Arthur S. Napier, Early English Text Society, o.s. 150 (London: Oxford University Press, 1916), 48.1–6, it may be seen that the *mid-* clause can be used to form both positive and negative patterns. Search results were derived from the *DOE* online corpus.

39 For as discussion of the catalogue at Vercelli XIX.160–4, see above, 86–7.

40 For a poetic echo of these two homiletic lists in *An Exhortation to Christian Living*, lines 46–51, see [chapter 3](#) above (76–91), and the subsequent discussion of the same passage from Vercelli XIX.160–4.

42 Compare with the catalogue of sins listed in Vercelli II.69–75 and XXI.219–24, discussed above, 72 and 96–8.

43 Scragg's emendations are based on CCCC, 302 and 421 (198). The structure of the catalogue is roughly the same with or without these insertions, and it is perhaps worth noting Scragg's general readiness to emend words and phrases because they appear in an analogue or identified source. It is worth bearing in mind the argument for a skilful friar/scribe made by David d'Avray at the end of his 'Printing, Mass Communication, and Religious Reformation: The Middle Ages and After,' in *The Uses of Script and Print 1300–1700*, ed. Julia Crick and Alexandra Walsham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 50–70.

44 Additional homiletic parallels may be found in Wulfstan Xc.97–100, as well as in Napier LVI.291/7–10 and LVIII.303/15–19. For poetic parallels beyond *The Wanderer*, lines 62–9 (cited below, 127), see *The Seafarer*, lines 44–7, and *Instructions for Christians*, lines 163–5.

45 *Wulfstan*, 184.

46 See especially Orchard, 'The Wanderer,' 21–3, and McCabe, 'Vercelli X,' 35–7.

47 The passage in *The Wanderer* is cited from *ASPR* III, 135.

48 For a further consideration of this contrast, see Orchard, 'The Wanderer,' 21–2.

⁴⁹ See Vercelli II, IV, XV, XVI, XIX, XX, and XXI. Vercelli III contains the variant *broðor þa leofestan*.

50 For double occurrences of the phrase *a butan ende* within a single homily see Napier XXIX, 143/2 and 5, XLVII, 244/7–8 and 245/24, and Napier LVII 294/15 and 299/22; the anonymous homily found in both London, BL, Cotton Tiberius A.iii (fols. 87–8v), and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 115 (fols. 140–7), lines 51 and 184; and *Wulfstan* VII.22 and 171.

51 The evidence for the further use of Pseudo-Augustine and Paulinus as sources for Anglo-Saxon texts is discussed above, in 110 nn. 12 and 13.

52 For a list of these manuscripts of the *Synonyma*, see above, 110 n. 14.

53 On the evidence for the popularity of the *Synonyma* in Anglo-Saxon libraries, see above, 110 n. 14.

54 For scholarship on the *ubi sunt* topos, see above, 112 n. 19.

55 Szarmach presents the first full edition of *Warna* in his 'Return to Cotton Tiberius A.iii,' 166–81, at 177–81, and in so doing improves upon the transcription presented by F. Kluge in his study of the *ubi sunt* passages in *The Seafarer* in 'Zu altenglischen dichtungen: 2. Nochmals *Der Seefahrer*,' *Englische Studien* 6 (1883): 322–7 at 322–3 (and Szarmach's edition is cited throughout here). On the date, provenance, and compilation of Cotton Tiberius A.iii, see especially Helmut Gneuss, 'Origin and Provenance of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: The Case of Cotton Tiberius A.iii,' in *Of the Making of Books: Medieval Manuscripts, Their Scribes, and Readers. Essays Presented to M.B. Parkes*, ed. R. Robinson and Rivkah Zim (Aldershot: Scholars Press, 1997), 13–48; and Hussey, 'Ascetics and Aesthetics,' 318–66.

57 However, see the expert treatment of these lines by Claudia Di Sciacca, ‘The *Synonyma* by Isidore of Seville as a Source in Anglo-Saxon England’ (unpublished Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 2002), 123.

58 PL 83.865. I have here and elsewhere substituted medial u for v and i for j .

59 The text cited is from Szarmach's edition, printed in 'Return to Cotton Tiberius A.iii,' 178.

60 Cross emends *gedrefeð* to *gedrefed* as an example of ð for *d* confusion. See Cross, “‘Ubi Sunt’ Passages,’ 43 and, subsequently, Szarmach, ‘Return to Cotton Tiberius A.iii,’ 178.

- 61 Scragg inserts the phrase ['mid seolfrenum ruwum ⁊ beddum'] ('with silver tapestries and bedding'). This emendation is adapted from variant readings found in CCCC MSS 302 and 421, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 343, and BL, Cotton Faustina A.ix. The phrase may have been omitted from Vercelli X for stylistic reasons; the additional details about the tapestry and bedding found in these variant texts seem to delimit the deliberately vague tension created in the passage between death and sleep. See further below, 135.

62 The homilist uses obscure ‘gold’ compounds elsewhere in the homily. Excluding all variant texts for Vercelli X, the compound *heafodgold*, in line 61, occurs only one other time in the extant corpus, in the Paris Psalter, Psalm 8.6; *goldfrætwe*, in line 225, occurs only one other time, in *Christ III*, line 995.

63 Cf. *Ælfric's Colloquy*, ed. G.N. Garmonsway (London: Methuen, 1939; repr. 1965), lines 159–61. The items in Vercelli X.220–31 are reminiscent of the lavish catalogue of merchant's goods presented in the *Colloquy*: '[Purpuram et sericum, pretiosas gemmas et aurum, uarias uestes et pigmenta, uinum et oleum, ebur et auricalcum, aes et stagnum, sulfur et uitrum et his similia.] Pællas 7 sidan, deorwyrþe gymmas 7 gold, selcuþe reaf 7 wyrtgemanc, win 7 ele, ylþesban 7 mæstlingc, ær 7 tin, swefel 7 glæs, 7 þylces fela' ('Crimson and silken garments, precious gems and gold, rare vestments, and spice, wine and oil, ivory and brass, copper and tin, sulfur and glass, and many such things'). Though the Latin version of the *Colloquy* presents sustained 'u' and 's' alliteration, which has a similar ornamenting effect to the passage in Vercelli X, these devices are largely lost in translation into the vernacular.

64 Also see Di Sciacca, 'The Synonyma by Isidore of Seville,' 123, who points out that the elements of gold, silver, gems, and fine cloth all also appear in the so-called *Sermo Augustini* (ed., and Italian trans., Anna Maria Luiselli Fadda, *Nuove omelie anglosassoni della rinascenza benedettina Filologia Germanica*, Studi e Testi 1 [Florence: Le Monnier, 1977], 139–57 at 147), which likewise contains an *ubi sunt* passage. Since, as will be noted in [chapter 5](#), 145 and 149, the *Sermo Augustini* shares verbal parallels with a Latin text known as the pseudo-Isidorian *Sermo* III, it may be (as Di Sciacca suggests) that the author of Vercelli X had access to an alternative catalogue and drew from it to fill out the passages from the *Synonyma*.

65 Matthew 9:2 of the Lindisfarne Gospels translates *lectus* as *bær*, and Luke 17:34 of the Rushworth gospels translates the same word as *hrof*. A similar play on images can be found in Vercelli VII.56–62, in admonition of weak women (see above, 209–11). In that homily, the vocabulary linking soft clothes, beds, and herbs with sin is familiar, though made more explicit by the repetition of the same element, *hnesc* - ('soft'), placing the emphasis not so much on avarice or luxury, as it appears to be in Vercelli X, but rather upon sins caused by frailty and spiritual weakness.

66 The metaphor of the house beset by calamity recurs in works such as *The Phoenix* (lines 199b–207) and in *The Meters of Boethius* (VII.29–39); for editions, see *ASPR* III, 99–100 and V, 161 respectively. Also see the passage quoted above, 106–7, from King Alfred’s Preface to the *Soliloquies* of St Augustine, which present a possible parallel for Vercelli X.170.

67 Scragg does not take these rhetorical markers into consideration in his edition.

68 Cf. the variant readings in Bodley 343 and CCCC 302 and 401.

69 PL 83.865. Scragg misses out these lines in his edition, *VH*, 209.

70 See especially Vercelli XI.63–70 and XII.51–64.

71 Homoeoteleuton occurs in the following places: Vercelli X.24–5, 25, 26, 29–30, 58, 71–2, 104, 137–8, 160–1, and 203.

72 Elsewhere in the Vercelli homilies, homoeoteleuton occurs in the following places: II.3; III.159–60; IV.296–7; V.121–2 and 149; VII.75 and 117; IX.58 and 111–12; XVI.155–6; XVIII.161–2; XIX.24, 33–4, 48, 108, and 170; XXII.37, 144, and 189; XXIII.10–13 and 38–9.

- 1 See further Robert DiNapoli, *An Index of Theme and Image to the Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church* (Hockwold cum Wilton: Anglo-Saxon Books, 1995), 83–4. The passages in question are Vercelli IV.77–82, 117–307, and 162–83; VII.60–71 and 94–108; IX.59–65, 65–82, and 68–82; X.55–121; XIV.1–17, 45–53, and 86–98; XX.152–79; XXI.61–86; XXII.37–42, 147–50, 152–6, and 157–63.

- 2 Thomas N. Hall, 'The Psychedelic Transmogrification of the Soul in Vercelli Homily IV,' in *Time and Eternity: The Medieval Discourse : Selected Papers from the International Medieval Congress, Leeds, July 2000*, ed. Gerhard Jaritz and Gerson MorenoRiaño (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 309–22 at 310.

3 See the list of Old English and Latin texts containing this feature below, 145–9.

- ⁴ See Wright, “‘Macarius’ Homily,’ 210–34, and Di Sciacca, ‘The *Ubi Sunt* Motif,’ 365–87; these studies appeared after the submission of my dissertation in December 2002; though Di Sciacca and I arrived independently at many of the same conclusions regarding the connections between Vercelli XXII and the ‘soul-and-body’ corpus of homilies, her work has since helped me to refine some of the conclusions I reached in my thesis.

- 5 On the wider corpus of debate literature going back to the earliest examples in Mesopotamia, see Sebastian Brock, 'The Dispute between Soul and Body: An Example of a Long-Lived Mesopotamian Literary Genre,' *Aram* 1 (1989): 53–64 (reference from Di Sciacca, 'The *Ubi Sunt* Motif,' 266).

- 6 On the earliest known origins of 'soul-and-body' literature, see Théodor D. Batiouchkof, ed., 'Le débat de l'âme et du corps,' *Romania* 20 (1891): 1–55 and 511–78 at 3–17; and Louise Dudley, *The Egyptian Elements in the Legend of Body and Soul*, Bryn Mawr College Monographs 8 (Baltimore: J.H. Furst, 1911).

7 For editions of the *Visio Sancti Pauli*, see especially Theodore Silverstein, ed., ‘*Visio Sancti Pauli*’: *The History of the Apocalypse in Latin Together with Nine Texts*, Studies and Documents 4 (London: Christopher’s, 1935), especially [chapters 1](#) and [3](#); and *Apocalypse of Paul: A New Critical Edition of Three Long Latin Versions*, ed. Silverstein and Anthony Hilhorst, Cahiers d’Orientalisme 21 (Geneva: Patrick Cramer, 1997). On Old English body-and-soul connections to the Vision itself, see Antonette diPaolo Healey, ed., *The Old English Vision of St. Paul*, Speculum Anniversary Mono graphs 2 (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1978). The texts containing the address are catalogued below, on 144. The Old English texts containing the motif of the soul’s departure from its body include Napier XLVI (235/6–21, 236/21, and 237/10); the three versions of the ‘Three Utterances of the Soul’ (in Hatton 114, fols. 102v/18–105v/20; Cotton Faustina A.ix, fols. 21v/16–22v/23 and CCC 302, 71–73; and Junius 85/86, fols. 32v/1–34v/10); and Bede’s description of the death of King Cenred’s friend in the *Ecclesiastical History* I.2, and *Guthlac* A, lines 1–29 (as cited by Healey, ed., *Old English Vision*, 42–4).

8 The Macarius legend is preserved most fully in the so-called *Vitae patrum*, PL 73.1011–12. On the ‘Macarius’ homily derived from this legend, see below, 145 n. 19.

- 9 Dorothy Haines makes this analogy of the ‘dramatic monologue’ in ‘Courtroom Drama and the Homiletic Monologues of the Vercelli Book,’ in *Verbal Encounters: Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse Studies for Roberta Frank*, ed. Antonina Harbus and Russell Poole (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 105–23.

- 10 For examples of Christ's monologue in Old English literature, see the poem *Christ III*, lines 1379–1514; Vercelli VIII and its variants contained in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 340 (fols. 33r–5v), and CCCC 198 (fols. 43v–7r); CCCC 41 (295–301) and a variant contained in CCCC 303 (72–5); the homily in CCCC 302 (fols. 73–8), and a variant contained in London, BL, Cotton Faustina A.ix (fols. 23v–7v); as well as two homilies contained in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 114 (fols. 105v–111r) and (fols. 111r–14v).

- 11 For examples of the speech delivered by the ‘dry bones,’ as derived independently from Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo XXXI* (G. Morin, ed., *Sancti Caesarii Arelatensis Sermones*, CCSL 103–4 [Turnhout: Brepols, 1953]), see Vercelli XIII; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 343 (fols. 163–4v) [Irvine VII]; and Princeton, University Library, W. H. Scheide Collection 71 (127–38) [Blickling X]. James E. Cross also discusses this topos in his ‘The Dry Bones Speak – A Theme in Some Old English Homilies,’ *JEGP* 56 (1957): 434–9.

¹² See Haines, 'Courtroom Drama,' 106–7.

13 Healey, ed., *Old English Vision*, 45–50, presents an especially concise and well-annotated list.

14 The information found in [table 2](#) is a conflation of distinctions made by Healey, ed., *Old English Vision*, 45–50; Gail Dana Richiardi, ed., ‘The Grave-Bound Body and Soul: A Collective Edition of Four Related Poems from the Vercelli and Exeter Books, Bodley and Worcester Manuscripts’ (unpublished PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1976), 92–103; Haines, ‘Rhetorical Strategies,’ 53; and Moffat, ed., *Old English Soul and Body*, 29–35.

- 15 For a comparative discussion of the poetry, see, for example, Moffat, ed., *Soul and Body*, as well as his 'A Case of Scribal Revision in the Old English *Soul and Body*,' *JEGP* 86 (1987): 1–8, and 'The Manuscript Transmission of the Old English *Soul and Body*,' *MÆ* 52 (1983): 300–2; Peter R. Orton, 'Disunity in the Vercelli Book *Soul and Body*,' *Neophilologus* 63 (1979): 450–60, and 'The Old English *Soul and Body*: A Further Examination,' *MÆ* 48 (1979): 173–97. For treatments of soul-and-body literature in prose, see Dudley, 'Early Homily,' 225–53; Richiardi, ed., 'Grave-Bound Body,' 1–184; Haines, 'Rhetorical Strategies,' 44–126.

16 See Willard, 'Address,' 965 and 979, and also Wright, "'Macarius' Homily,' 212.

17 On the influence of the *Visio Pauli*, see Healey, ed., *Old English Vision*, 45.

18 The homily is sometimes referred to as the *Augustini Sermo*, since these words appear in a late sixteenth- or early-seventeenth-century hand at the start of the homily in Cambridge, University Library, Ii.1.33 (at fol. 207), presumably indicating that the homily was considered to be an Augustinian compilation. For commentary on this attribution and for an edition, see R. Willard, 'The Address of the Soul to the Body,' *PMLA* 50 (1935): 969–73, at 959. See too Fadda, ed., *Nuove omelie anglosassoni*, 139–57. For the date of the manuscript, see *Catalogue*, item 18, art. 40.

19 The homily has been so named 'because its main source is a story concerning the desert father Macarius, although his name is not given in the Old English' (Wright, "'Macarius" Homily,' 211). For a full edition of the homily, see Sauer, ed., *Theodulfi Capitula*, 411–16. Scragg also prints lines 1–70 of the homily alongside his text of Vercelli IV in *VH*, 90–3, while Wright includes lines 1–53 in his "'Macarius" Homily,' 220–7. See too Louise Dudley, 'An Early Homily on the "Body and Soul" Theme,' *JEGP* 8 (1909): 225–53, which contains a useful parallel edition of the relevant passages from this and the Napier XXIX homily (see below, 146 n. 27, for details about the edition), as well as their Latin counterparts in Texts IIa and IIb (cited below, 149). On the dating of the manuscript, see *Handlist*, item 66 (who places the origin in Exeter, showing the manuscript was perhaps joined initially with CCCC 191; see *Handlist*, item 60), and *Catalogue*, item 50, art. 2.

20 For an edition of the homily, see Napier, 134–43. The dating here follows *Handlist*, no. 637 (origin Worcester), while Ker places the date at s. xi third quarter in his *Catalogue*, item 331, art. 22.

- 21 The homily begins on fol. 2v and continues on fols. 12r–17r; interpolated (on fols. 3r–11v) is an Old English translation of the *Visio Pauli*. Willard has argued against the ‘sheer coincidence’ of this arrangement, contending that there is continuity between the end of the text of the vernacular Vision of Paul and the latter portion of the ‘Junius’ homily; see Willard, ‘Address,’ 959, and Healey, ed., *Old English Vision*, 10–11. Editions of the text can be found in R. Willard, ed., ‘Address,’ 961–3, and also Healey, ed., *Old English Vision*, 63–73. For the dating of the manuscript, see *Handlist*, item 642; see also *Catalogue*, item 336, art. 2, which argues instead for a later date in the mid-eleventh century. The most recent edition of the homily appears in Fadda, ed., *Nuove omelie anglosassoni*, 158–73.

22 Bruno Assmann's edition in fact collates two separate homilies in CCCC 302 and London, BL, Cotton Faustina MS A.ix in his *Angelsächsische Homilien und Heiligenleben* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1889; repr. 1964), 164–9. The homilies are treated together here, as they are by all subsequent critics. For the dating of the former manuscript, see *Handlist*, item 86, and *Catalogue*, item 56, art. 11; and for the latter, see *Catalogue*, item 153, art. 5.

23 For the most recent edition of Vercelli IV, see *VH*, 90–107. Scragg also edits the relevant portions of the variant texts for Vercelli IV. The homily in CCCC 41 appears in the margins of this manuscript (in the blank spaces of a copy of the Old English Bede), and represents the only complete surviving variant text for Vercelli IV; for manuscript details, see *Handlist*, item 39, which lists the manuscript's origin as the South of England, with a probable Exeter provenance by s. x^{3/4}; and *Catalogue*, item 32, art. 9, which dates the manuscript instead to s. xi¹. The version in CCCC 367, pt. II survives only in a single-page twelfth-century fragment, as noted in *Catalogue*, item 63.

24 This placement of the address between death and judgment is also present in the Vercelli and Exeter poems, *Soul and Body I* and *II* (see Healey, ed., *Old English Vision*, 46).

25 Wright, “Macarius” Homily, ’ 212.

26 Healey, ed., *Old English Vision*, 10.

27 This chronology has been discussed most recently by Wright (“Macarius” Homily,’ 213 n. 16). The comparison between the texts in the Old English and Latin groups 2 and II can be seen most clearly in Dudley’s parallel text of all four homilies, as cited above in n. 19. On the connection specifically between Napier XXIX and the Macarius homily, see Julius Zupitza, “Zu “Seele und Leib,”” *ASNSL* 91 (1893): 369–404, at 370–84, who argues for an independent translation, and the response to him by Karl Jost, ed., *Wulfstanstudien*, 206–7, who argues for this text as the source of Napier XXIX (as cited, and apparently accepted, by Wright, “Macarius” Homily,’ 213 n. 16).

28 See Wright, “‘Macarius’ Homily,’ 210–34. In establishing this order of borrowing, Wright has overturned the assumption of both Donald Scragg and Malcolm Godden that the ‘Macarius’ homily must present an abridgment of Vercelli IV. See further Scragg, ‘The Corpus of Vernacular Homilies,’ 229 and 256, and Godden’s review of Sauer, *Theodulfi Capitula in England*, in *MÆ* 48 (1979): 263–5 at 265 (as cited by Wright, “‘Macarius’ Homily,’ 213 n. 17). The passages in Vercelli IV that Wright identifies as deriving ultimately from the *De paenitentia* are as follows: lines 1–11, 18–19, 23–38, and 57–79.

29 The retention of ‘ancient’ topoi in a given homily cannot in general be used accurately as a diagnostic for chronology. For example, the occurrence in the *Sermo Augustini* and the ‘Macarius’ homily of the soul’s respite at Easter, a topos ultimately derived from one of the earliest witnesses to the soul’s address in the full version of the *Visio Pauli*, has been used to argue the general primacy of the soul’s address in these texts (see Willard, ‘Address,’ 974). However, such a gauge by theme has proved to be a thorny business, since on occasion demonstrably ‘late’ texts prove to contain ‘primitive’ themes: so, for example, while some have supposed that the dual preservation of the address by the blessed and wicked soul, in that specific order, forms an archaic trait, the late witness of this topos in Vercelli IV and in the Latin *Sermo ad fratres in eremo* LXIX, but in no other Old English version, shows the vulnerability of such a position (for a contrasting viewpoint, see Di Sciacca, ‘The *Ubi Sunt* Motif,’ 375).

30 Healey, ed., *Old English Vision*, 48. On the motif of the respite, see further Batiouchkof, ed., 'Le débat,' 33–4, who showed that the topos of the weekly respite developed from Eastern recensions of the *Visio Pauli*, offering a corrective to Willard, 'Address,' 969–72, who consulted only the shortened Western version of the *Visio Pauli*, where the Easter respite is customary. Among the eleven texts considered in this study, the topos of the respite at Easter can be found, for example, in the *Sermo Augustini* (ed. Fadda, 151/82) and the 'Macarius' homily (ed. Sauer, 413/73–5), while the weekly respite can be found in the Vercelli poems *Soul and Body I* and *II*; the poems are unusually descriptive on this front, since as Willard demonstrates, 'The sorrowful soul returns every seven nights (l.10) for three hundred years (l.12), but only during the night (l.66), as it must leave at cock-crow (l.68), when the holy men sing praises to the living God to go back to the dwelling places of the ungodly, whence it came, and to which the body has destined it' (Willard, 'Address,' 973).

31 On the inclusion and order of the addresses, see Willard, 'Address,' 976–8.

32 On the relative culpability of body and soul, see below, 154–6.

33 Haines, 'Rhetorical Strategies,' 47–52.

³⁴ PL 83.1223–5, and see also *CCPMA*, IB no. 5306.

35 PL 40.1355–7. See also the parallel text in Dudley, ‘Early Homily,’ 225–53. The homily itself has not survived in any known manuscripts, and it is therefore difficult to date it against the other homilies; see further *CCPMA*, IA no. 1196. As Haines points out, however (‘Rhetorical Strategies,’ 49), an *incipit*, survives in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, 5558, at fol. 46.

36 The homily has been edited by Batiouchkof, 'Le débat,' 576–8. The version has been so titled because the homily survives in an eleventh- or twelfth-century manuscript compiled in a Nonantola monastery. See further José Ruysschaert, *Les manuscrits de l'abbaye de Nonantola*, Studi et Testi 182 (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1955), 55.

37 On the relationship between the *Sermo Augustini* and the Latin Pseudo-Isidorian *Sermo III*, see Haines, 'Rhetorical Strategies,' 49–50. As Haines demonstrates, the Pseudo-Isidorian text 'provides the basic text for part of the [Old English] homily, though it must be at some remove from the exemplar used by the author of [the *Sermo Augustini*], as the Latin which is sometimes quoted in the O[ld] E[nglish] differs substantially from that printed by Migne' (Haines, 'Rhetorical Strategies,' 49). As Haines and others have noted, an abbreviated version of the Latin text survives in the *Sermo ad fratres in eremo* LXVIII, though this text does not contain the soul's address, and is therefore not of direct relevance here.

38 For the textual discrepancies between these homilies, see Dudley, 'Early Homily,' 235–9.

39 See especially Di Sciacca, 'The *Ubi Sunt* Motif,' 365–87. Apart from this recent study, the only substantial treatment of Vercelli XXII exists in the parallels briefly noted between the *Synonyma* and the *ubi sunt* passage contained in the Old English *Sermo Augustini*. For further discussion of this relationship, see Cross, 'Ubi Sunt Passages,' 23–44.

40 According to Scragg, the relevant sections of the *Synonyma* include I.5–13, 16–17, 19–22, 26–36, and 38–51; and II. 1–11 and 24–6.

⁴¹ This treatment of sources is derived from *VH*, 366–7, and also *Fontes* (last accessed November 2006).

42 See above, [chapter 4](#), 128–39, for a further discussion of Isidore’s *Synonyma* and its connection to Vercelli X.

43 *VH*, 367. For a counter-argument to Scragg, see Claudia Di Sciacca, 'The *Synonyma* by Isidore of Seville as a Source in Anglo-Saxon England' (unpublished PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2002).

44 Such a vision structure is present, for example, in the Old English and Latin groups 2 and II.

45 As in the homilies belonging to groups 1, 3, and 4, as well as the two Old English poems.

46 For the transformation and torture of the soul in Vercelli IV, see Hall, 'Psychedelic Transmogrification,' 309–22. On the graphic treatment of this theme in *Soul and Body I* and *II*, where the body is punished according its joints, see Thomas D. Hill, 'Punishment according to the Joints of the Body in the Old English *Soul and Body II*,' *N&Q* 15 (1968): 409–10, and 'Punishment according to the Joints of the Body, Again,' *N&Q* 16 (1969): 246.

⁴⁷ See especially Richiardi, ed., 'Grave-Bound Body,' 110–11, for a discussion of the interim judgment between death and Judgment Day.

48 See Dudley, 'Early Homily,' 225–53.

49 Healey, ed., *Old English Vision*, 42.

50 *VH*, 370, with several lines supplemented from the *Synonyma* l.16–17.

51 Richiardi, ed., 'Grave-Bound Body,' 90–1. On the topos of the foul-smelling sins in the *Visio Pauli*, see Dudley, *Egyptian Elements*, 61, who potentially traces its ultimate roots to the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* (61 n. 16). For further analogues within the wider Old English corpus, see *CHI*.33, lines 103–6 (*Dominica xvii Post Pentecosten*), where the wicked soul is treated as an analogue for the leprous Lazarus, and *ÆHom* I.4, lines 196–201 (*Feria VI in quarta ebdomada Quadragesima*), where the wicked man's sins cause him to stink. Further analogues may be found in the description of the changing hue and shape of the wicked soul as a reflection of its sins on Judgment Day in *Christ III*.1221–326, and in Vercelli IV.287–94 (with a contrasting description of the good soul in IV.153–61).

52 Richiardi, ed., 'Grave-Bound Body,' 102.

53 See *ibid.*, 122.

54 See Allen J. Frantzen, 'The Body in *Soul and Body I*,' *Chaucer Review* 17 (1982): 76–88. For overviews of earlier scholarship on the theme of the body's culpability, see Moffat, ed., *Soul and Body*, 38–40, and Richiardi, ed., 'Grave-Bound Body,' 111–12 and 115–16.

55 Scragg suggests in his glossary (VH, 446) that the use of *mænð* ('means' or 'signifies') in Vercelli XXII.153 translates *indicat*, a misreading of the minims in *iudicat*. I have accordingly translated the word as 'judges,' which makes better sense in this context.

56 Hall, 'Psychedelic Transmogrification,' 314. Compare this passage with one in Vercelli VII.78–83, where the body is shown to be the seat of corruption in terms not dissimilar to those in the passage from XXII: 'Hwæt, ge witon ðæt ælc hus bið þe fægere þe hit man hwitað. Swa eac bið ælc lichoma ðe fægerra þe hine þære sawle scima gebyrhtet. Sona se lichoma sceal bion unfæger, þonne he mid unrotnesse 7 mid sare aseted bið, ða cumað of ðam liðan olehtunge. For ðan ic lære þæt we flion þa liðnesse 7 flion [þa olehtunge] bysse worulde, ac hie synt swiðe swete' ('Lo, you know that each house is that much the fairer when one whitewashes it. So also is the body that much fairer when the radiance of the soul makes it bright. Immediately the body shall be ugly, when it is beset with unhappiness and with sorrow, which come from those soft indulgences. Therefore I teach that we should flee those softnesses, and flee [those indulgences] of this world, though they are very sweet'). For a discussion of this homily and its sources, see Zacher, 'The Source of Vercelli VII,' forthcoming.

- 57 Merritt Y. Hughes, ed., *John Milton: Paradise Lost* (New York: Macmillan, 1962). I note in passing that several people have detected a connection between the Old English *Genesis B* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The fact that Milton knew Junius, the original owner of the manuscript containing the *Genesis* poem, has been cited as further evidence of this connection, as noted (sceptically) by S.A.J. Bradley, trans., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (London: Dent, 1991), 12. Also see the entry 'Anglo-Saxon Period, Milton's Knowledge of,' in *A Milton Encyclopedia*, ed. William B. Hunter, Jr, vol. 1 (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1978–83), 51–3.

58 On the theme of the ‘drawing out of the soul,’ see Dudley, *Egyptian Elements*, 22 and 95. For an interesting variation of this theme, see the text of *Soul and Body I*, 56 (presented below, 159–60), where God’s own hand is said to retrieve the soul.

59 Moffat, ed., *Soul and Body*, 53–5, who supplies a version of line 59 for the Exeter text that misses out the same line. He also emends *goldwela*, which does not alliterate, to *boldwela*, which alliterates with both *bryde* and *beag*. The *-gold* -element in the Vercelli version may represent an example of dittography, though the absence of alliteration in this line may also be explained by the fact that the Vercelli version is more prosaic in its diction. For further discussion of prosody in the two poems, see *ibid.*, 20–4.

60 See, for example, Sylvia Huntley Horowitz, 'The Ravens in *Beowulf*,' *JEGP* 80 (1981): 502–11. It is perhaps worth pointing out that both *Soul and Body I* and *II* mention a second bird, the cock, at line 68, whose call heralds the departure of the soul from its body (as cited above, 147 n. 30). The potential symbolism of the bird as a figure of the soul has been explored by J.E. Anderson, by comparison with the two Exeter Book riddles 42 and 43, where the 'soul-and-body riddle,' is preceded by riddle 42, whose solution is 'cock' and 'hen' (spelling out *hana* ['cock'] and *hæn* ['hen'] in runes); see his 'Two Spliced Riddles in the Exeter Book,' *In Geardagum* 5 [1983]: 57–75). For Egyptian parallels, see Dudley, *Egyptian Elements*, 28.

61 This association has been posited by Richiardi, ed., 'Grave-Bound Body,' 117.

63 For discussion of this rhetorical device and its link to the *Synonyma*, see [chapter 4](#) above, 112, especially n. 19.

65 Dudley, *Egyptian Elements*, 61.

66 Death appears personified in a host of Egyptian and Egyptian-derived materials; as Dudley has shown, Death serves as a psychopomp in the Coptic Gospels of the Deaths of Mary and Joseph, and in the *Testament of Abraham*. As Dudley argues, the figure of Death is later replaced by angels (such as Michael or Gabriel) or devils, according to the fate of the soul (*Egyptian Elements*, 32). Given the archaicism of this figure, it seems reasonable that the homilist may have failed to recognize the topos properly.

67 See the discussion of this passage below, 171–2.

68 Sauer, ed., 414/81–6 and Napier, 140/20–141/2. See also Dudley, ed., ‘Early Homily,’ 228–9 (sections 3 and 4).

70 See also Haines, 'Rhetorical Strategies,' 75–6 for a brief discussion of the rhetorical features of this passage.

71 For a discussion of the probable provenance of this lament, see Richiardi, ed., 'Grave-Bound Body,' 89 and 96. The Old English poems do not contain this structure; however, the content of the lament in the poems is similar to the other nine Old English texts.

72 See, for example, Vercelli XXII.51, which reads: ‘þa he me reste geearnigan ne wolde!’ (‘when he [the body] wished not to earn rest for me!’). The passage compares loosely in content with the exhortation to the living in IV.102–3 (and the variant text in CCCC 41), which states, ‘þæt beoð þonne, þa þe her swincaþ swiðost for Godes naman, þa lædað þa englas on ece reste’ (‘that will be then, that those who here strive most greatly for God’s name, those the angels will lead to eternal rest’). However, the closer parallel is with a sequence of five statements in IV.104–16, which use the structure *þa he ... þa (ge)earnode he me* (‘when he [the body, performed x sin] ... ‘then he earned for me [punishment]’). This construction (presented in full below, on 172–5) is popular in Old English homilies, particularly when it is used in the affirmative to signal benefits in heaven. Verbal parallels occur in soul-and body-homilies in Vercelli IV.165 and Napier XXIX (Napier, ed., 142/23–6), and in a range of other homilies, as in Cambridge, University Library, li 4.6 [Napier XXX], Napier ed., 151/4–8, and Vercelli XII.80–1 and XVII.75–6, for example.

73 The lament as stated in all three versions appears unique among extant Old English homilies.

74 Sauer, ed., 414/88–9, and Dudley, ed., ‘Early Homily,’ 231 (section 6).

75 Napier, ed., 140/20–1, and Dudley, ed., ‘Early Homily,’ 231 (section 6). The full reference, which describes the body as an unwanted dwelling place (‘wa me earmre, þæt ic æfre geboren sceolde wurðan, oððe þæt ic æfre sceolde niman eardungstowe on þis fulestan and on þis wyrstan lichaman’; ‘Woe is wretched me, that I ever had to be born, or that I ever had to take up a dwelling place in this foulest and worst body’), presents a parallel for Vercelli XXII.50–1 below.

76 The verb ‘to see’ plus the construction ‘light of the middle-earth’ occurs elsewhere in an extant homily only in *ÆHom* VI.26–7, 343–5, 346–8 for *Feria VI in quarta ebdomada Quadragesimae* (311–29).

[77](#) Sauer, ed., 415/120–1, and also Dudley, ed., ‘Early Homily,’ 135 (section 19).

78 Napier, ed., 141/21–3 and Dudley, ed., ‘Early Homily,’ 135 (section 19).

⁷⁹ Napier, ed., 140/19–141/2, and also Dudley, ed., ‘Early Homily,’ 229–30 (sections 5–9).

80 The passage in Vercelli XXII.179–85 reads as follows: ‘God þone mannan to his anlicnesse geworhte, ⁊ þonne hwæðere idellice he swincð ⁊ on gewinne he bið drefed. He goldhord samnað, ac he ne wat hwam he hit samnað. For ðam þe we ealle nacode ⁊ forlætene arisað swa swa we geborene wæron, ⁊ to þam andrysenlican [dome] we ferað nacode ⁊ earne ⁊ unrote ⁊ gesworcene mid ege ⁊ mid fyrhðu’ (‘God created man in his likeness, and then, nevertheless, vainly he toils and in hardship he is troubled. He gathers together a gold-hoard, but he knows not for whom he gathers it. Because we will all arise naked and derelict, just as we were born, and to that dreadful [judgment] we will travel naked and wretched and unhappy and terrified with awe and with fear’).

⁸¹ Napier, ed., 141/21–3, and also Dudley, ed., ‘Early Homily,’ 135 (section 19).

82 Dudley, ed., 'Early Homily,' 135 (section 19). Di Sciacca, by contrast, argues that 'neither of the two Latin homilies [i.e., *Sermo ad fratres in eremo* LXIX and 'Le débat'] however, mentions this world's light, a detail that the three Old English homilies share with the *Synonyma* ' ('The *Ubi Sunt* Motif,' 377).

83 Sauer, ed., 415/120–1, Napier, ed., 141/21–3, and Dudley, ed., ‘Early Homily,’ 135 (section 19).

84 Scragg, 'Napier's "Wulfstan" Homily XXX,' 210. As he argues, Napier XXIX draws elsewhere upon the homily preserved in CCCC 41 (listed as item 4 in [table 2](#)) rather than upon Vercelli IV itself.

85 Di Sciacca, 'The *Ubi Sunt* Motif,' 378–80.

86 See also the variants for this speech *VH*, 98–9.

[87](#) Sauer, ed., 414/97, Napier 140/24, and Dudley, ed., 'Early Homily,' 231 (section 9).

88 Dudley, ed., 'Early Homily,' 231 (section 7).

89 See above, 158–9.

- 91 Compare Vercelli XXII.160–3: ‘Selre bið men, þæt he swelte, þonne he his lichoman fyrwetgyrnessum gewe[mm]e. Selre wære ðære sawle þæt hio hrædllice of ðam lichoman anumen wære ðonne he hie ðurh his synlustas forlure’ (‘It would be better for the man that he die, than he spoil his body with insatiable sexual desire. It would be better for the soul that she would quickly be seized out of the body, than she be lost through his sinful desires’). Scragg points out a further three uses of the otherwise rare *fyrwetgyrnessum* (at Vercelli XII.165 [twice], and 168), arguing that the meaning is ‘otherwise unattested but clear in all four instances’ (VH, 433). Following this usage, there may be a pun on *forlyr*, which (sometimes glossing *fornicatio*) means ‘sexual intercourse outside marriage.’

92 For further analogues, see *Soul and Body I* and *II*.75–89, which state that it will seem better for the sinner never to have been born a man on Judgment Day. See also [table 2](#), texts 2a (Sauer, ed., 411/22–412/25) and 2b (Napier, ed., 140/5–8; Dudley, ed., ‘Early Homily,’ 227), as well as text 4 (Vercelli IV.63–5), which state that it is better to atone than to undergo hell-torments.

93 There is a sudden shift at this point in the speech to the use of the second-person pronoun, which seems to signal the return to the soul's address of the body. Scragg (*VH*, 100) likewise provides a new paragraph-marker here, presumably indicating the same switch. I also note the odd shift within the soul's address to Death from the singular *þu* to the plural *ge*, which Scragg surmises must have been introduced by the scribe (*VH*, 106 n. 232). However, the alteration may also signal the scribe's adaptation of a previous depiction of death into an address.

94 As Scragg points out in the glossary to *VH*, *tesoword* is unattested elsewhere in the extant corpus. He also demonstrates that *beodlafum* and *beodgereordum* occur only one other time each, in Blickling IV (53.13) and *Genesis* A 1518b, respectively.

95 Chrysostom's homily XXIX is printed by Migne in PG 63, cols. 203–8; Mutianus's Latin translation is printed in PG 63, cols. 419–26. For a comparative edition of Vercelli VII and the Latin Mutianus homily, see Zacher, 'The Source of Vercelli VII.'

97 The passage at Romans 13:14 is also relevant: ‘11 et hoc scientes tempus quia hora est iam nos de somno surgere nunc enim propior est nostra salus quam cum credidimus 12 nox praecessit dies autem adpropiauit abiciamus ergo opera tenebrarum et induamur arma lucis 13 sicut in die honeste ambulemus non in comesationibus et ebrietatibus non in cubilibus et inpudiciis non in contentione et aemulatione 14 sed induite Dominum Iesum Christum et carnis curam ne feceritis in desideriis’ (‘11 And that knowing the season; that it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep. For now our salvation is nearer than when we believed. 12 The night is passed, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light. 13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day: not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy: 14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences’; trans. Douay-Rheims).

98 The catalogue at lines 31–47 falls partially within those lines identified by Wright as being derived from the Macarius homily (‘The “Macarius” Homily,’ 221–3). However, the list as it appears in Vercelli IV is greatly expanded, showing either the interference of the homilist himself or another source.

99 The idea of a common textual intervention is not obviously prevented by any manuscript evidence, since Scragg's examination of the distribution of reflexes for *io* and *eo* forms throughout the Vercelli collections demonstrates the preference of like forms in both Vercelli IV and XXII (among many other homilies), a fact that is made more remarkable by the notable dearth of these forms in the group of homilies leading up to Vercelli XXII in the collection (XIX–XXI). See Scragg, 'Compilation,' 326–43.

100 On the question of an Alfredian corpus, see above, 106 n. 1.

101 See especially the introduction to Walter John Sedgefield, ed., *King Alfred's Old English Version of Boethius: De consolazione philosophiae* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899), xxv–xxxv.

- 1 The source of this passage is Cambridge, Pembroke College 25, item 38. The image may have been inspired by Ecclesiasticus 11.3, which states that 'brevis in volatilibus est apis et initium dulcoris habet fructus illius' ('the bee is small among flying things, but her fruit has the greatest sweetness'). For a broader overview of the trope, see Augustine Casiday, 'St Aldhelm's Bees (*De uirginitate prosa* cc. IV–VI): Some Observations on a Literary Tradition,' *ASE* 33 (2004): 1–22.

- 2 In the context of Vercelli XIX, the image contains some irony, as the invitation to partake of spiritual honey is issued beside an injunction to fast, as is appropriate for Rogationtide. The image may fruitfully be contrasted with that in *Homiletic Fragment I*, 18–23 (which in the Vercelli Book appears in the cluster of poems just prior to Vercelli XIX), which uses a similar metaphor comparing bees to deceivers who carry honey in their mouths but sting with their flattery. On the image of the bees in this Vercelli poem, see Jonathan Randle, ‘The “Homiletics” of the Vercelli Book Poems: a Case Study in *Homiletic Fragment I*,’ in *New Readings in the Vercelli Book*, ed. Zacher and Orchard (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, forthcoming).

- 3 Hill, 'Reform and Resistance,' 21 and 22. It must be said that in offering this helpful description, Hill was distinguishing between the styles in the Vercelli and Blickling Books, on the one hand, and that of Wulfstan and Ælfric, on the other, only in terms of degree. For a similar characterization of the Blickling and Vercelli homilies, see Gatch, 'Eschatology,' 117–65.

- 4 M.H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 7th ed. (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1999), 96–7.

5 Ibid., 97.

- 6 The claim for the figurative nature of all language has its roots in such early writings as Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*, where he argues that in language all thought must take on forms that are only ever approximate. See further H.E. Butler, ed. and trans., *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian* (London: W. Heinemann, 1921–2). Charles K. Ogden credits the nineteenth-century writer Jeremy Bentham with reviving this theory in his *Bentham's Theory of Fictions* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1932), though the proposition has been most thoroughly treated in post-structuralist contexts. Influential contributions include that of Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multidisciplinary Studies in the Creation of Meaning in Language* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), who in turn draws heavily upon Aristotle's *Poetics*, and George Lakoff, 'The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor,' in *Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Andrew Ortony (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

⁷ See Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana*, especially book III.x.14–16 (in PL 34.71–2).

- 8 See further *De doctrina Christiana* III.x.14 (in PL 34.71): ‘Huic autem obseruationi qua cauemus figuratam locutionem, id est, translata[m] quasi propriam sequi; adjungenda etiam illa est, ne propriam quasi figuratam uelimus accipere’ (‘but to this obseruation whereby we warn against taking an expression that is figurative, which is to say transferred, as if it were literal, one should add that we would not wish to take the literal as figurative’).

⁹ See, for example, *De doctrina Christiana* II.vi.7–8 (in PL 34.38–9) and IV.viii.22 (in PL 34.98–9). On the pleasure of similitudes in particular, Augustine writes in book II.vi.8: ‘Nunc tamen nemo ambigit, et per similitudines libentius quaeque cognosci, et cum aliqua difficultate quaesita multo gratius inueniri. Qui enim prorsus non inueniunt quod quaerunt, fame laborant; qui autem non quaerunt, quia in promptu habent, fastidio saepe marcescunt: in utroque autem languor cauendus est’ (‘But now no one doubts both: that things are more pleasantly understood by means of their likenesses, and that things sought with some difficulty are much more gratefully found. For those who do not find straightaway what they seek, work with poverty of expression; however, those who do not seek, because they have them close to hand, often flag in scorn: but listlessness is to be guarded against in both cases’). Translations from Augustine’s *De doctrina Christiana* are adapted from D.W. Robertson, Jr, *Saint Augustine: On Christian Doctrine* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1997).

- 10 On the influence of the *ars grammatica* in Anglo-Saxon England, see Knappe, 'Classical Rhetoric,' 16–29. For a brief discussion of the evidence for rhetorical training in Anglo-Saxon England, see above, 59–61.

- 11 On the sources for Bede's *De schematibus et tropis*, see especially Ulrich Schindel, 'Die Quellen von Bedas Figurenlehre,' *Classica et Mediaevalia* 29 (1968): 169–86. A comprehensive study of Quintilian's grammatical treatise can be found in Louis Holtz, *Donat et le tradition de l'enseignement grammatical: Études sur l'Ars Donati et sa diffusion (IVe–IXe siècle)* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1981). For a treatment of the place of Bede's treatise within the Anglo-Saxon school curriculum, see Carin Ruff, 'The Hidden Curriculum: Syntax in Anglo-Latin Teaching' (Unpublished PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2001), 114–57. Donatus's *Ars maior* survives in only two manuscripts in Anglo-Saxon England (see further *Handlist*, items 321 and 829e), though it appears to have had a much wider circulation during this period: according to Michael Lapidge (*Anglo-Saxon Libraries*, 38 and 44) Boniface made use of this work in his *Ars grammatica*, which he wrote while still at Nursling, and Tatwine apparently had access to a copy of the text while at Breedon-on-the-Hill as he composed his own *Ars grammatica*. The work is also cited in Anglo-Saxon booklists, known through continental manuscripts copied from lost Anglo-Saxon exemplars and cited by prominent Anglo-Saxon writers (such as the author of the so-called *Leidan Glossary*, as well as Aldhelm, Bede, Alcuin, Abbo of Fleury and Ramsey, Byrhtferth of Ramsey; see further Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Libraries*, 54, 87, 134, 176, 180, 207, 231, 244, and 269).

- 12 *Libri II De arte metrica et De schematibus et tropis. The Art of Poetry and Rhetoric: The Latin Text with an English Translation*, ed. Calvin B. Kendall, Bibliotheca Germanica Series Nova vol. 2 (Saarbrücken: AQ-Verlag, 1991), 182. All citations of Bede's Latin quotations are taken from Kendall, and translations are adapted and altered.

- 13 Bede's definition of metaphor (in Kendall, ed., *Art of Poetry*, 183–5) is as follows: 'metafora est rerum uerborumque translatio. Haec fit modis quattuor: ab animali ad animale, ab inanimati ad inanimale, ab animali ad inanimale, ab inanimale ad animale' ('metaphor is the transfer of things and words. This happens in four ways: from an animate to an animate object, from an inanimate object to an inanimate object, from an animate object to an inanimate object, [and] from an inanimate object to an animate object').

- 14 The two extant Anglo-Saxon manuscripts containing the *De schematibus et tropis* are London, BL, Harley 521 [fol. 2], and Worcester, Cathedral Library, Q. 5. See further *Handlist*, nos. 418.8 and 765.

- 15 Ruff, 'Hidden Curriculum,' 115. Byrhtferth of Ramsey cites Bede's *De schematibus et tropis* in his *Enchiridion* II.3.22–127, and in the prologue to his *Vita Sancti Oswaldi* (as cited by Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Libraries*, 268).

16 For in-depth treatments of the use of figurative language in Old English poetry (with some going back to the nineteenth century), see Richard Heinzel, *Über den Stil der altgermanischen Poesie* (Strassburg: K.J. Trübner 1875); Francis Gummere, *The Anglo-Saxon Metaphor* (Halle: E. Karras, 1881); Ruth Wehlau, *The Riddle of Creation: Metaphor Structures in Old English Poetry* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997); and Joseph David Wine, *Figurative Language in Cynewulf: Defining Aspects of a Poetic Style*, Studies in Old Germanic Languages and Literatures (New York: Peter Lang, 1993). For studies of individual texts, see, for example, D.G. Calder, 'Figurative Language and Its Contexts in *Andreas*: A Study in Medieval Expressionism,' in *Modes of Interpretation*, ed. P.R. Brown et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 115–36; L.J. Kiser, '*Andreas* and the *lifes weg*: Convention and Innovation in Old English Metaphor,' *NM* 85 (1984): 65–75; Hugh Magennis, 'The Cup as Symbol and Metaphor in Old English Literature,' *Speculum* 60 (1985): 517–36; and G.S. Tate, 'Chiasmus as Metaphor: The *Figura Crucis* Tradition and *The Dream of the Rood*,' *NM* 79 (1978): 114–25.

17 See below, 192 ff.

18 See the discussion of the structure and style of these homilies above, 63–105.

32 Thomas N. Hall pointed out in a personal communication that one of the long Latin versions of the *Visio Pauli* contains a parallel statement, which ultimately derives from Christ's prophetic warning, uttered at the Last Supper, that one of the disciples in his presence will soon betray him: 'Woe to the man by whom the Son of man will be betrayed; it would have been better for him if he had never been born.' Mt 26:24 reads 'Vae autem homini illi per quem Filius hominis traditur; bonum erat ei si natus non fuisset homo ille,' and Mk 14:21, 'Vae autem homini illi per quem Filius hominis traditur; bonum ei si non esset natus homo ille'; the Old English translations of these two verses read: 'Betere wære þam menn þæt he næfre nære acenned and betere him wære þæt se mann acenned nære,' which in their shared usage of the comparative *betere* rather than the biblical *bonum* are closer to the wording of the Vercelli homily. See further Silverstein and Hilhorst, eds., *Apocalypse of Paul*.

33 For further discussion of this motif, see Richiardi, ed., 'Grave-Bound Body,' 119.

34 Moffat, ed., *Soul and Body*, 57, standardizes the Vercelli Book poem *Soul and Body I* to his edition of the Exeter Book poem *Soul and Body II*. Moffat treats the half-line ‘þær swa god wolde’ in *Soul and Body I*, line 83a as an aberration, arguing that it looks like an example of dittography, both because it repeats verbatim in line 81b, and because it is omitted entirely in the variant version of this poem in *Soul and Body II* (see *Soul and Body*, 56–7). Moffat’s restructuring of the lines, however, skews the alliteration in the *Soul and Body I*.83 (‘ge þeah ðu wære wýrmcynna þ[æt] grimmeste’), since *Soul and Body II* has *wýrreste* for *grimmeste*.

35 A close parallel for this list of beasts can be found in the Old English poem *Solomon and Saturn*, especially lines 22–4, 81–3, and 152–4; my thanks to Aaron Ralby for pointing this out.

36 See the discussion of these two homilies above, 63–105.

37 For a further commentary on the use of *-tacen* - in Old English literature, see Ann W. Astell, 'Holofernes's head: *Tacen* and teaching in the Old English *Judith*,' *ASE* 18 (1989): 117–33. The clustered distribution of the element *-tac (e)n* - in Vercelli I, V, VI, and XVII is as follows: I.147 and 261; V.41, 58, 62, 67, 73, 82, 91, 101, 109, 141, and 153; VI.17, 24, 42, 45, and 48; XVII.68, 78, and 96.

³⁸ See J.W. Tupper, *Tropes and Figures in Anglo-Saxon Prose* (Baltimore, 1897), 5–12.

39 Though *gisl* is usually interpreted as ‘hostage,’ comparison with the Latin gloss, *obses*, reveals that it may mean more broadly a ‘pledge’ or ‘security’ (see *VH*, glossary). This is surely the sense conveyed in this passage. I compare the passage, for example, with *Blickling* I (9) ‘Eala þu eadige Maria ... forþon þe God þe hafap to gisle her on middangearde geseted’ (‘Alas, you blessed Mary ... because God has set you here in the world as a security’).

40 For further discussion of the signs in Vercelli V and VI, see James E. Cross, 'Portents and Events at Christ's Birth: Comments on Vercelli V and VI and the Old English Martyrology,' *ASE* 2 (1973): 209–20, and Hall, 'Portents.'

41 *De doctrina Christiana* III.x. (in PL 34.71).

42 The fates of the good and wicked souls in Vercelli IV are described in more detail in [chapter 4](#), 168–78 above, in the context of vernacular versions of the soul’s address to the body.

43 On the wider semantic range of the terms *hiw* and *bleoh*, see Hall, 'Psychedelic Transmogrification,' 315.

44 The descriptions of both the good and wicked souls are nevertheless more graphic than is commonplace in most Old English versions of this topos. Comparison may be made, for example, with the descriptions of the changing hue and shape of the wicked soul in *Christ III*.1221–1326 and Vercelli XXII.37–46. For further explication of this topos, see below, 264–5.

45 Again, a quotation from *De doctrina Christiana* III.xvi (in PL 34.74) may be useful in explaining the tone. Though Augustine is writing here about examples derived from biblical figures, he explains that 'si praeceptiua locutio est aut flagitium aut facinus uetans, aut utilitatem aut beneficentiam iubens, non est figurata' ('if an expression is perceptual, either forbidding a wicked act or a crime, or commanding something useful or beneficial, it is not figurative').

46 See Hall, 'Psychedelic Transmogrification,' 316–18.

47 For a discussion of Alcuin and Ælfric and their treatment of the human soul, see further *ibid.*, 318–19.

48 See below, 252–4 for continued discussion of this passage and its Latin source in Felix's *Vita sancti Guthlaci*.

49 As Scragg notes in the glossary of *VH*, 436, the compound verb *hashryman* presents a hapax legomenon in Vercelli XXIII. However, it may be seen that there is a parallel use of the elements separately in Ælfric's *Colloquy*, lines 29–31, in the dialogue written for the Plowman. The Latin and Old English texts are as follows: 'Habeo quendam puerum minantem boues cum stimulo, qui etiam modo raucus est pre frigore et clamatione; Ic hæbbe sumne cnapan þywende oxan mid gadisene, þe eac swilce nu has ys for cylde 7 hream' ('I have a boy coaxing the oxen with a goad; he is now hoarse on account of the cold and [his] crying out'). Here, the verb clearly refers to the boy and not to the animal.

50 Andy Orchard, ed., 'The Wonders of the East: Old English Text,' in his *Pride and Prodiges: Studies in the Monsters of the 'Beowulf'-Manuscript* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1995; repr. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 189 (section 7).

51 If indeed such parallelism is acceptable, the passage in *Wonders* may also help to illuminate some of the textual difficulties found in Vercelli XXIII, which have been emended in the above edition by Scragg. These include the substitution of *mæ[ge]re onsyne* ('thin faces'; in accordance with the variant version of the homily contained in London, BL, Cotton Vespasian D.XXI [fols. 23r–26v]) for the original *mænigre onsyne*, which may be a corrupted form of the plural for 'many faces,' parallel to the reference in *Wonders* to *hunda heafda* (dogs' heads). Cf. the edition of Vercelli XXIII by Herbert Pilch, who makes generally fewer emendations than does Scragg: 'The Last Vercelli Homily: A Sentence Analytical Edition,' in *Historical Linguistics and Philology*, ed. Jacek Fisiak (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1990), 297–336.

52 See also the discussion of figurative language in Vercelli VII below, on 209–16.

53 See further Felix's *Vita sancti Guthlaci* (VSG), chapter xxix. The descriptions in the two homilies are linguistically close: whereas Vercelli XIV.12–13 reads 'swa þeotende leo,' XXIII.16 reads 'swa grymetende leo.' Both descriptions – namely, 'as a roaring lion' – are of course ultimately based on the Latin biblical tag *leo rugiens*.

54 Cf. Augustine's discussion of this biblical trope in *De doctrina Christiana* III.xxv (in PL 34.79). The figure is also discussed below, 256–8.

55 Another example of a prevalent metaphor entails the comparison of the devil to an archer, in Vercelli IV.307–21, IX.114–17, and in XXIII.17–24 and 50–3. Though in each case the devil is depicted as shooting arrows (*stræl-*) made of sins, only the passages contained in Vercelli XXIII can effectively be traced to the source-text in Felix’s *Vita sancti Guthlaci*, chapters xxix and xxx, respectively. This type of martial imagery, which provides a complex intersection between the Christian and the heroic, can be found elsewhere in the Vercelli collection in XIX.68–80 and XX.141–51, both of which depict the righteous devotees of Christ as holy warriors in combat with the devil. For further descriptions of the devil as an archer in the Vercelli manuscript, see IV.307–21 and IX.114–17. For commentary on this topos, see Mark Atherton, ‘The Figure of the Archer in *Beowulf* and the Anglo-Saxon Psalter,’ *Neophilologus* 77 (1993): 653–7; Lenore Abraham, ‘The Devil, the Yew Bow, and the Saxon Archer,’ *Proceedings of the PMR Conference* 16–17 (1992–3): 1–12; and Joseph B. Trahern, Jr, ‘Caesarius, Chrode-gang, and the Old English *Vainglory*,’ in *Gesellschaft, Kultur, Literatur: Rezeption und Originalität im Wachsen einer Europäischen Literatur und Geistigkeit. Beiträge Luitpold Wallach gewidmet*, ed. Karl Bosl, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 11 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1975), 167–78, at 170, 173, 176.

56 For commentary on the themes of spiritual economics and of Christ as merchant in later medieval literature, see further Lester K. Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978.); David D'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons Diffused from Paris before 1300* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), chap. 4; and James Simpson, 'Spirituality and Economics in *Passus* 1–7 of the B Text,' *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 1 (1987): 83–103.

57 For an examination of this topos in Rogationtide homilies, see Gordon B. Sellers, 'The Old English Rogationtide Corpus: A Literary History' (unpublished PhD diss., Loyola University of Chicago, 1996), 53–9.

58 The evidence has been debated by Scragg in 'Compilation,' 323–4, and in *VH*, xxxix–xl. See also Wright, 'Vercelli Homilies XI–XIII,' 207–9.

59 Although there is no lacuna in the manuscript, Scragg posits error (VH, 225 and 227), arguing that *awuniendan* should parallel *ecan* rather than *cypeman* so that the sense of the passage is about ‘everlasting things’ rather than ‘everlasting merchants.’ Scragg’s emendation, as he himself points out, requires either the alteration of *pa* to *hone*, or else the insertion of a feminine or plural noun to parallel *welan*. An argument in favour of the manuscript reading *pa awuniendan cypemen* is that Vercelli XII.63–4 likewise states that it is our duty *symle* (‘perpetually’) to perform spiritual trades (see the passage in full below, 205–6).

60 For a further discussion of contrasts denoting permanence and transience, see Christine Fell, 'Perceptions of Transience,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. Godden and Lapidge, 172–89.

- 61 The influence of Caesarius of Arles on Old English authors has been discussed in some length by Harry J. Solo, 'The Influence of Caesarius of Arles on Two Old English Homilies,' *N&Q* 223 (1978): 196–7; Szarmach, 'Caesarius of Arles,' 315–23; and Trahern, 'Caesarius of Arles,' 105–19. See also the discussion of Caesarius's homilies above, 20, 49–50, 54, and 75.

62 Morin, ed., *Sancti Caesarii Arlatensis Sermones*, 857. Text cited from *VH*, 224.

63 For a further explication of the rhetorical differences between the Latin and Old English versions of this passage, see also Wright, 'Vercelli Homilies XI–XIII,' 221–2.

64 Scragg sensibly emends the MS *unyðnesse* to *uðnesse*, arguing that the negative ending (*un -*) was transposed from the previous word in the passage. See *VH*, 231 n. 61.

65 Though there is no known source for the metaphor itself, Wright, 'Vercelli Homilies XI–XIII,' 212–13, has nevertheless linked the concept of *timor domini* as it is expressed in XII.54–71 specifically to Cassian's *De institutis coenobiorum*, and more generally to iconography in relation to this topos associated with the Benedictine Reform.

66 See above, 93 n. 78.

67 For the full quotation, see above, 7–8. On the question of dating in relation to the quotation, see C. Sisam, ed., *Vercelli Book*, 36, and Wright, ‘Vercelli Homilies XI–XIII,’ 204–27. For an opposing view, see *VH*, 220.

68 For further examples of homilies that present tirades against negligent teachers and other offences against the church see, for example, Ælfric's *De Die Iudicii* (*Æhom* II.19, 590–609), and Wulfstan's homilies XVIb.21, XVII.42, and XXc.182–4 (*Wulfstan*).

69 See Wright, 'Vercelli Homilies XI–XIII,' 209–27.

70 Malcolm Godden, 'Money, Power and Morality in Late Anglo-Saxon England,'
ASE 19 (1990): 41–65.

71 See, for example, *Cnut I* (ed. and trans. F. Liebermann, *Die Gesetzen der Angelsachsen*, 3 vols. [Halle: Niemeyer, 1903–16; repr. Aalen: Scientia, 1960], 18–18.3); *Cnut II* (ed. Liebermann, 308–70); *Institutes of Polity* XXIV, ‘Be eallum cristenum mannum’ (ed. K. Jost, *Die ‘Institutes of Polity, Civil and Ecclesiastical’: Ein Werk Erzbischof Wulfstans von York*, Schweizer Anglistische Arbeiten 47 [Bern: Francke, 1959], 223–5); Wulfstan, Homily XIV, ‘The First Sunday in Lent’ (*Wulfstan*, 35–45); Wulfstan, Homily XX, ‘Sermo Lupi ad Anglos’ (*Wulfstan*, C version only, 85–91).

72 See the online *Fontes* database entry on *CHII.38*.

73 Zacher, 'Source of Vercelli VII.' The following discussion of Vercelli VII is adapted and substantially abbreviated from this article.

74 Section numbers for the Latin text derive from the edition of the Latin homily in Zacher, 'Source of Vercelli VII.'

75 Also see my discussion in [chapter 4](#) above, 132–4, concerning Vercelli X.220–30 and the variant versions of this passage contained in BL, Cotton Faustina A.IX (fols. 27v–31v), CCCC 302 (221–30 and 78–83), Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 343 (fols. 164rv), and Hatton 113 (fols. 73r–80v) (Napier XXX). As in Vercelli VII, the relevant passages in these texts describe the inability of riches to stave off torment, suffering, and decline. They also contain a series of verbal analogues with Vercelli VII, as can be seen in the double reference in Vercelli X.227 to *wyrtgemengnessum* ('the mixture of herbs') and in X.225 to *reste* ('bed'; here in the nominal rather than verbal form).

76 Assuming that because *constituta* is feminine, it must refer to *anima*.

77 I thank Professor Jane Roberts for pointing out this textual difficulty in a personal communication.

78 I borrow this term from F.C. Robinson, *'Beowulf' and the Appositive Style*.

79 See further the entries in the *DOE* (Toronto: PIMS, 2003), svv. *fel-tun* and *feltun-grep*.

80 Compare *CHI*.7, 240–6, where beasts who rot in dung are compared to ‘fleshly men’ (*flæsclīce menn*) who ‘end their days in the stench of their lust’ (‘on stence heora galnysse geendiað heora dagas’); likewise in *CHII*.27, 187–91, Ælfric compares the unrepentant sinner to a swine (*swyn*) that ‘returns to the dung-heap after washing’ (‘cyrð to meoxe æfter his ðweale’). Also compare with the passage in *CHII*.28, 197 line 23 of Alfred’s translation of Gregory the Great’s *Pastoral Care*, which likens Saul’s hastening to the toilet as he is pursued by David (literally to *feltune*, ‘to the dung-heap’), to ‘evil lords’ (*yflan hlafurdas*) who cannot dismiss evil thoughts in their hearts without ‘bursting out in foul works’ (‘utaberstað on fullicum weorcum’); in Henry Sweet, ed., *King Alfred’s West-Saxon Version of Gregory’s Pastoral Care*, EETS o.s. 45, 50 (Oxford: 1967–8), 196–7. See too the description of the unrighteous who lie forsaken just as a pile of dung in chapter XXXVI of the Old English version of Boethius’s *Consolation of Philosophy* (ed. Sedgefield, 104.4).

81 For an excellent treatment of the subject of gluttony in Vercelli VII, see Andrew P. Scheil, *The Footsteps of Israel: Understanding Jews in Anglo-Saxon England* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 240–82.

82 See, for example, Fred C. Robinson, 'The Devil's Account of the Next World: An Anecdote from Old English Homiletic Literature,' *NM* 73 (1972): 362–71; repr. in his *The Editing of Old English* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 196–205.

83 Wright, *Irish Tradition*, 175–9.

84 See, for example, Wright's discussion of the three passages cited below from Vercelli IX in 'Cosmology and Myth in "The Devil's Account," in his *Irish Tradition*, 175–214. See especially 182 and 194 for a discussion of similes and metaphors.

86 Scragg comments on some of the transmission errors in *VH*, 189 n. 196–200. I have maintained Scragg’s emendation of the imperfect *for* (of Vercelli IX.197) to *for[lete]* though Szarmach’s *forgeate* (‘forget’) is also intriguing, emphasizing the fleeting nature of these pleasures.

87 T.S. Eliot, 'The Metaphysical Poets,' in his *Selected Essays 1917–32* (London: Faber and Faber, 1932; repr. 1986), 282.

88 This message is inverted in the parody of this trope found in the Middle English poem 'The Land of Cockayne,' which uses a similar surfeit of sex and wealth to highlight the splendours of an earthly paradise.

89 For stock depictions of heaven in Anglo-Saxon literature, see, for example: Tristram, 'Stock Descriptions'; and Jane Roberts, 'A Preliminary "Heaven" Index for Old English,' *LSE* 16 (1985): 208–19.

90 Wright, *Irish Tradition*, 206–14.

91 An approximate word count of the folios leading up to the lacuna shows that all but the first full folio, 61v (containing Vercelli IX.11–34), contain from 266–9 words per page, while the two folios after the lacuna contain approximately 251 words (on fol. 64r) and 274 words (64v). The missing text supplied from the two manuscripts in Bodley 340, fols. 38v–9r (for what appears in *VH* as IX.125–50 and 164–7), and Hatton 113, fol. 76r (for what appears in *VH* as IX.151–63), would average an approximate 261 words per page (or 523 words per leaf). For a discussion of the probable contents of the lacuna, see further Scragg, ‘Napier’s “Wulfstan” Homily XXX,’ 201–2.

92 For discussion of this passage, see Wright, *Irish Tradition*, 113–45. The text is from *VH*, 170.

⁹³ See Wright's discussion of these and other Irish parallels in *Irish Tradition*, 136–45.

94 The Blickling passage (*Blickling* 62), of course, contains the different detail of the *harne stan* (as does *Beowulf* 1414b–15a), which Wright traces ultimately to a detail in the Apocalypse of Peter (Wright, *Irish Tradition*, 130 n. 97). As Wright points out, this connection was first made by D.D.R. Owen, ‘The Vision of St Paul: The French and Provençal Versions and Their Sources,’ *Romance Philology* 12 (1958): 33–51 at 45–6.

95 Scragg (VH, 176), chooses this manuscript as his base text because it is overall closer to Vercelli IX. Wright, in his edition of the homily in *Irish Tradition* (284–7 [including translation]), uses instead a homily contained in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 115 (fols. 140r–7r), arguing that it ‘seems to represent better the original version of this passage’ (275).

96 *CHII*, 528/110–20. This particular simile is primarily drawn from Gregory the Great's *Homiliae in euangelia* I, though as Cross and Godden have shown, Ælfric has altered some of the wording in the Latin, perhaps splicing in phrases from Gregory's homily XXVIII, where he likewise discusses the ages of the world. See further J.E. Cross, 'Gregory, Blickling Homily X and Ælfric's *Passio S. Mauricii* on the World's Youth and Age,' *NM* 66 (1965): 327–30, and Malcolm Godden, *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: Introduction, Commentary and Glossary*, EETS s.s. 18 (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 339.

97 *CHII*, 227/213–228/229. The conceit derives from Augustine's *Sermo* 76 (PL 38, cols. 482–3), and possibly also Pseudo-Augustine, *Sermo* 72 (PL 39, col. 1886). See Godden, *Introduction*, 563–4.

98 *Blickling*, 59/4–14. I am leaving out Tupper's example (*Tropes and Figures*, 35) from Napier XLIX, ed. Napier 262/5, which contains a variant version of the extended conceit in Vercelli X.206–20.

99 On the various treatments of the ages of the world, see, for example, Hildegard L.C. Tristram, '*Sex aetates mundi*': *Die Weltzeitalter bei den Angelsachsen und den Iren*, Anglistische Forschungen 165 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Verlag, 1984); and Aaron J. Kleist, 'The Influence of Bede's *De Temporum Ratione* on Ælfric's Understanding of Time,' in *Time and Eternity: The Medieval Discourse*, ed. Gerhard Jaritz and Gerson Moreno-Riaño, International Medieval Research 9 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 81–97.

100 See 183 and n. 12 above.

- 1 Joyce Hill, 'The Preservation and Transmission of Ælfric's Saints' Lives: Reader-Reception and Reader-Response in the Early Middle Ages,' in *The Preservation and Transmission of Anglo-Saxon Culture*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach and Joel T. Rosenthal, *Studies in Medieval Culture* 40 (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University Press, 1997), 405–30, at 405–6. Hill builds upon Allen J. Frantzen, *Desire for Origins: New Language, Old English, and Teaching the Tradition* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 111.

2 See above, 51–5.

- 3 For a discussion of the difficulties incumbent in the classification of saints' lives, see Thomas D. Hill, '*Imago Dei* : Genre, Symbolism, and Anglo-Saxon Hagiography,' in *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives and Their Contexts*, ed. Szarmach, 35–50; Margaret Bridges, 'Exordial Tradition and Poetic Individuality in Five Old English Hagiographical Poems,' *ES* 60 (1979): 361–79; and Robin Norris, 'Deathbed Confessors: Mourning and Genre in Anglo-Saxon Hagiography' (unpublished PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2003).

- 4 For a discussion of these categories, see Michael Lapidge, 'The Saintly Life in Anglo-Saxon England,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 243–63 at 252–5; and Rosemary Woolf, 'Saints' Lives,' in *Continuations and Beginnings: Studies in Old English Literature*, ed. Eric Stanley (London: Nelson, 1966), 37–66.

- 5 *Andreas* in particular shares formulaic language in common with *Beowulf*, as noted, for example, by Hans Schabram, 'Andreas und Beowulf: Parallelstellen als Zeugnis für literarische Abhängigkeit,' *Nachrichten der Giessener Hochschulgesellschaft* 34 (1965): 201–18; Orchard, *Critical Companion*, 163–6; and Powell, 'Verbal Parallels.' On the broader connections between *Beowulf* and hagiography in general, see Orchard, *Critical Companion*, 149–51.

6 For an examination of the relationship between the items in the manuscript, see Orchard, *Critical Companion*, 24–39.

7 On these heroes and monsters, see in general Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the 'Beowulf'-Manuscript* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1995).

8 As Clemoes explains, the collection of Ælfric's Saints' Lives are 'narrative pieces intended not for reading as part of the liturgy, but for pious reading at any time.' See his 'The Chronology of Ælfric's Works,' in *The Anglo-Saxons: Studies in Some Aspects of Their History and Culture Presented to Bruce Dickins*, ed. Peter Clemoes (London: Bowes & Bowes, 1959), 221.

- 9 Malcolm Godden, 'Experiments in Genre: The Saints' Lives in Ælfric's Catholic Homilies,' in *Holy Men and Holy Women*, ed. Szarmach, 261–87. On this kind of generic cross-pollination, see Hugh Magennis, 'St Mary of Egypt and Ælfric: Unlikely Bedfellows in Cotton Julius E. vii?' in *The Legend of Mary of Egypt in Medieval Insular Hagiography*, ed. Eric Poppe and Bianca Ross (Dublin: Blackrock Press, 1996), 99–112.

10 Godden, 'Experiments,' 262.

- 11 Szarmach, 'Ælfric Revises,' 38–61. For other treatments of Ælfric's compositions on Martin, see Frederick M. Biggs, 'Ælfric as Historian: His Use of Alcuin's *Laudationes* and Sulpicius's *Dialogues* in His Two Lives of Martin,' in *Holy Men and Holy Women*, ed. Szarmach, 289–315; and Judith Gaites, 'Ælfric's Longer Life of St Martin and Its Latin Sources: A Study in Narrative Technique,' *LSE* n.s. 13 (1982): 23–41. On the Vercelli Homily XVIII for Martin, see especially Dalbey, 'The Good Shepherd,' 422–34; and Juliet Hewish, 'Eastern Asceticism versus Western Monasticism: A Conflict of Ideals in the Old English Translations of the Works of Sulpicius Severus,' *Quaestio* 4 (2003): 115–28. For the Blickling homily, see Joseph Henry Hamilton, 'A Critical Edition of the Blickling Homily on St. Martin of Tours' (unpublished PhD diss., Bowling Green State University, 1979). For further materials, see Michael Lapidge, 'A New Hiberno-Latin Hymn on St Martin,' *Celtica* 21 (1990): 240–51; and Susan Rosser, 'Old English Prose Saints' Lives in the Twelfth Century: The Life of Martin in Bodley 343,' in *Rewriting Old English in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Mary Swan and Elaine M. Treharne, CSASE 30 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 132–42.

12 On the differences between these styles, see above, xxvii, 32, 38, and 41.

- 15 Manish Sharma, 'A Reconsideration of the Structure of *Guthlac A* : The Extremes of Saintliness,' *JEGP* 101 (2002): 185–200.

- 16 Éamonn Ó Carragáin has also argued that Vercelli XXIII and *Elene* provide a fitting end for the Vercelli collection in his 'Cynewulf's Epilogue to *Elene* and the Tastes of the Vercelli Compiler: A Paradigm of Meditative Reading,' in *Lexis and Texts in Early English: Studies Presented to Jane Roberts*, ed. Christian J. Kay and Louise M. Sylvester (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 2001), 187–201.

- 17 On the date of Felix's *uita*, see Bertram Colgrave, 'The Earliest Saints' Lives Written in England,' *PBA* 44 (1958): 35–60.

18 The *uita* survives in full or in part in thirteen medieval manuscripts, as catalogued in detail by Roberts, 'Inventory,' 193–233. The standard edition of the *uita* is still *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac : Introduction, Text, Translation, and Notes*, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), hereafter VSG. For treatments of the so-called conventional elements of the *uita* shared in common with other hagiographical accounts, see especially Benjamin P. Kurtz, 'From St Antony to St Guthlac: A Study in Biography,' *University of California Publications in Modern Philology* 12 (1926): 103–46, which highlights in particular verbal and thematic connections with Evagrius's fourth-century Latin translation of the *Vita Antonii*, and also those lives that draw from it, such as Jerome's Life of Hilarion, Sulpicius Severus's Life of Martin, Gregory's Life of Benedict, and Bede's Life of Cuthbert. Downey, 'Intertextuality,' esp. 25–67, both importantly supplements Kurtz's work with new parallels drawn from these earlier Latin lives, and challenges Kurtz's stress upon the primacy of Evagrius's *uita* as a source for Felix's *uita*.

19 The Old English life is contained in London, BL, Cotton Vespasian D.xxi, fols. 18–40, but was formerly part of another codex in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud Misc. 509 (s. xi med. or xi2). See *Handlist*, no. 657. The preferred scholarly edition (cited here throughout) is Paul Alfred Gonser, ed., *Das angelsächsische Prosa-Leben des hl. Guthlac*, Anglistische Forschungen 27 (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1909; repr. Amsterdam: Swets & Zeitlinger, 1966). Also see Charles Wycliffe Goodwin, ed. and trans., *The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St Guthlac ...* (London: J.R. Smith, 1848). For studies of the Old English *Life*, see W.F. Bolton, ‘The Manuscript Source of the Old English Prose Life of St. Guthlac,’ *Archiv* 197 (1961): 301–3; and Jane Roberts, ‘The Old English Prose Translation of Felix’s *Vita sancti Guthlaci*,’ in *Studies in Earlier Old English Prose*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach (Binghamton: SUNY Press, 1986), 363–79.

20 The two poems are contained in the so-called 'Exeter Book,' in Exeter, Cathedral Library 3501 (fols. 32v–52v). See Gneuss, *Handlist*, no. 257 (s. x²). Scholarly treatments of these texts are simply too numerous to catalogue here. It will perhaps suffice to mention that a book-length study and edition of these texts has been made by Jane Roberts, ed., *The Guthlac Poems*. On the relationship between the poems, see for example, Franz Charitius, 'Über die angelsächsische Gedichte vom hl. Guðlac,' *Anglia* 2 (1879): 265–308; Jane Roberts, 'A Metrical Examination of the Poems *Guthlac A* and *Guthlac B*,' *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 71 C (1971): 91–132; and Liuzza, 'Old English *Christ* and *Guthlac*,' 1–11.

21 Vercelli, Biblioteca Capitolare CXVII, fols. 133v–5v. For studies relating to Vercelli XXIII, see below, 231 n. 25.

22 Entries on Guthlac appear in three of the five surviving manuscripts containing the Old English Martyrology. The relevant manuscripts are CCCC 41 (s. xi¹–xi med.); CCCC 196 (s. x²); and London, BL, Cotton Julius A.x (s. x/ xi) [corresponding to *Handlist*, nos. 39f, 62, and 338]. For commentary on the entries, see J.E. Cross, 'On the Library of the Old English Martyrologist,' in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes*, ed. Michael Lapidge and Helmut Gneuss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 227–49, at 246, and Roberts, 'Inventory,' 203–4, at 204, who attributes the source to 'some litany, collect, or other martyrology (and of course to Felix's *uita*).'

23 See Charles Plummer, ed., *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1892), 42–3, and Roberts, ‘Inventory,’ 214.

- 24 Jane Roberts, 'An Inventory of Early Guthlac Materials,' *MS 32* (1970): 193–233. Roberts updates the still very useful survey produced by Walter de Gray Birch, *Memorials of Saint Guthlac of Crowland Collected from the Original Manuscripts* (Wisbech: Leach and Son, 1881). See too the entry '*Guthlacus, uita*' in *SASLC*, vol. 1, 244–7, which catalogues the relevant Anglo-Saxon materials pertaining to the life of Guthlac. Sarah Downey adds to the list of literature on Guthlac the late-twelfth-century *Liber Festivalis* by Alexander of Ashby, which contains a short verse life on Guthlac; see her 'Intertextuality in the Lives of St Guthlac' (unpublished PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2004), 164–5.

- 25 Treatments of the Vercelli homily have been more or less confined to the following few studies: Gonser, ed., *Das angelsächsische Prosa-Leben*, 1–117; Roberts, ‘Old English Prose Translation,’ 363–79, and her ‘Two Readings in the Guthlac Homily,’ in *Early Medieval Texts and Interpretations: Studies Presented to Donald G. Scragg*, ed. Elaine Treharne and Susan Rosser (Tempe, AZ: ACMRS, 2002), 201–10; Alexandra Hennessey Olsen, ‘Apotheosis and Doctrinal Purpose in the *Vercelli Guthlac*,’ *In Geardagum* 4 (1982): 32–40; and Pilch, ‘The Last Vercelli Homily,’ 297–336.

26 The parallel formulation in the *uita* is as follows: ‘erat itaque in praedicta insula tumulus agrestibus glaebris coacceruatus’ (VSG 92/ 22–3; ‘now there was in the aforesaid island a mound built of lumps of earth’). Two things are of note here. The first is that whoever abstracted the Vercelli homily apparently chose not to cancel what could have been in the original translation; if this homily were to be read on 11 April there is no problem: listeners would probably have already heard the island mentioned. The second is that while the modifier *[fore]sprecnan* does not occur in the parallel passage of the Vespasian *Life*, it does appear elsewhere in that text, in the context of Guthlac’s second arrival at Crowland, where we are told, ‘Ða wæs se eahtoða dæg þæs kalendes Septembres, þe man on þa tid wurðað sancte Bartholomei þæs apostoles, þa se eadiga wer Guðlac com **to þære foresprecenan stowe**, to Cruwlande, forþon he his fultum on eallum þingum ærest to þam sundorsetle sohte’ (‘Then it was on the twenty-fifth of August, which men on that day honour Saint Bartholomew the Apostle, when the blessed man Guthlac came **to the aforementioned place**, to Crowland, because he sought his help first in all things with respect to that hermitage’; emphasis mine); Gonser, ed., *Das angelsächsische Prosa-Leben*, 116, 49–53.

27 Szarmach, 'Style and Structure,' 261.

28 C. Sisam, *Vercelli Homilies*, 39–40; and *VH*, xxiv–xxv.

29 Ó Carragáin, 'the Vercelli Collector,' 68–9.

30 Ibid., 75.

- 31 For the discussion of the psychopomp, see Szarmach, 'Style and Structure,' 261, and on the role of the cross, Ó Carragáin, 'Rome, Ruthwell, Vercelli,' 88, and his 'the Vercelli Collector,' 74–5.

32 Cf. *VH*, 381.

33 All three topoi have been especially well developed in relation to the poem *Guthlac A*, though virtually not at all with regard to Vercelli XXIII. On the ascetic function of the 'mound' upon which Guthlac builds his homestead, see, for example, Laurence K. Shook, 'The Burial Mound in *Guthlac A*,' *MP* 58 (1960): 1–10; F. Reichardt, 'Guthlac A and the Landscape of Spiritual Perfection,' *Neophilologus* 58 (1974): 331–8; and Karl P. Wentersdorf, 'Guthlac A : The Battle for the *Beorg*,' *Neophilologus* 62 (1978): 135–42. On the temptations of Guthlac, see Hill, 'The Middle Way,' 182–7; Charles D. Wright, 'The Three Temptations and the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit in *Guthlac A*, 160b–169,' *Traditio* 38 (1982): 341–3; George E. Nicholas, 'Monasticism and the Social Temptation in the Old English *Guthlac A*,' *American Benedictine Review* 46 (1995): 444–58; Christopher A. Jones, 'Envisioning the *Cenobium* in the Old English *Guthlac A*,' *MS* 57 (1995): 259–91; and Sharma, 'Reconsideration,' 185–200. On the correspondences between Guthlac's translation to heaven at the end of *Guthlac A* and traditional vision literature, especially derived from the *Visio Pauli*, see especially below, 236 and 244–5 for references.

34 On the questionable relationship between *Guthlac A* and Felix's *uita*, see Roberts, *Guthlac Poems*, 19–29, and her 'Guthlac A : Sources and Source Hunting,' in *Medieval English Studies Presented to George Kane*, ed. Edward Donald Kennedy, Ronald Waldron, and Joseph S. Wittig (Wolfeboro, NH: Brewer, 1988), 1–18. In a recent paper ('Guthlac of Crowland, a Saint for England,' to appear as a forthcoming article), Roberts astutely asks, 'Is it mere coincidence that both the Exeter Book *Guthlac A* and Vercelli Homily XXIII should tell how, in his chosen home in the wilderness, the saint undergoes lonely struggles against the temptations of devils and [that they should] culminate with the arrival of St Bartholomew? Were the two texts, *Guthlac A* and Vercelli Homily XXIII, in the same manuscript, they might almost be regarded as twinned texts in prose and poetry.' I thank Jane Roberts for allowing me to view this paper before publication.

- 35 See Christian Donovan Aggeler, 'Reinventing the Holy Man: The Medieval English Guthlac Cycle and Its Contexts' (unpublished PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2001), 105–6 and 129–38, and Downey, 'Intertextuality,' 21–2 and 153–8.

36 See further Downey, 'Intertextuality,' 22.

37 See Aggeler 'Reinventing the Holy Man,' 129–38, and Downey, 'Intertextuality,' 155. As Downey argues, 'If the more prefatory material having to do with his early life were presented at Matins on the eve of his feast day, material somewhat similar to that extracted for Vercelli Homily 23 could have been read during the day itself, either during mass or at mealtimes; and the account of Guthlac's death might then have been read in short sections for his octave during the week following his feast day' (ibid., 185). For further consideration of *Guthlac A* as a monastic text, see Nicholas, 'Monasticism and the Social Temptation,' 444–58; Jones, 'Envisioning the *Cenobium*,' 259–91; and Patrick W. Conner, 'Source Studies, the Old English *Guthlac A* and the English Benedictine Reformation,' *Revue Bénédictine* 103 (1993): 380–413.

38 VSG, 19. This circumstance must, however, take into consideration the fact that the glossed Royal manuscript (which contains only a couple of leaves preserved by chance in a binding), provides only a portion of the prologue and a few glosses, not all Latin. I thank Professor Jane Roberts for this important caveat, as disclosed in a personal communication.

39 VSG, 92/22–3. The relevant Latin introduction includes the phrase ‘Erat itaque in praedicta insula tumulus agrestibus glebis coacervatus’ (‘There was in the said island a mound built of mounds of earth’). On this ‘second introduction,’ see Aggeler, ‘Reinventing the Holy Man,’ 105–6 and 129–38; Downey, ‘Intertextuality,’ 149–50; Roberts, *Guthlac Poems*, 7–8; her ‘St Bartholomew’s Day: A Problem Resolved?’ *MÆ* 46 (1977): 16–19; and her ‘Guthlac of Crowland.’

40 See above, 172–5 and 213–16.

41 Roberts, 'Old English Prose,' 364. For an earlier discussion of this relationship, see Gonser, ed., *Das angelsächsische Prosa-Leben*, 1–96.

42 See *VH*, 381.

43 The case has been made most comprehensively by Roberts, 'Old English Prose,' 372–73. For an opposing and earlier view, see Szarmach, 'Style and Structure,' 262.

44 Roberts, 'Old English Prose,' 365–70.

45 The most comprehensive comparison remains that in Gonser, ed., *Das angelsächsische Prosa-Leben*, 78–81.

46 This approach to the relative chronology of Vercelli XXIII and the Old English *Life* is explored by Gonser, as can be seen in his treatment of the differences between the two homilies in his *Das angelsächsische Prosa-Leben*, 1–96.

47 For an account of the various manuscripts and their relationships to one another, see especially *VSG*, 26–54.

48 Bolton, 'Manuscript Source,' 301–3.

50 Of these four manuscripts, only the first, Colgrave's C2, dates to the tenth century, s. x² or x^{3/4} (Gneuss, *Handlist*, item 103). All the others post-date the extant Old English versions contained in Vercelli XXIII and the Vespasian *Life*. See further Bolton, 'Manuscript Source,' 302.

51 Ibid., 302. See also Roberts, 'Old English Prose,' 364, who accepts this proposition.

52 VSG, 102 n. 14. From this point, all Latin quotations are from Colgrave's edition, since (as was demonstrated previously) claims for the identification of a precise group upon which the Vercelli homily and the Vespasian *Life* are based have not yet sufficiently been proved. Translations of the VSG here and throughout are adapted and sometimes changed from Colgrave's edition.

53 For the translation of this passage in the *Vespasian Life*, see 122/110–16.

55 The pairing of *freond* and *gefeonde* also occurs at the end of the homily at Vercelli XXIII.148–9.

56 See VSG, 13–14, and Roberts, ‘Inventory,’ 222 and 225.

57 VSG, 99 n. 36–8.

58 VSG, 99 n. 35 and 38.

59 For the parallel quotation in the *Vespasian Life*, see Gonser, ed., *Das angelsächsische Prosa-Leben*, 125/51–9.

61 The phrase is quoted again below in context, on 247.

62 In the case of those verb-doublings where both verbs are transitive, I have only included those pairs that take the same object. For this reason, I have excluded Vercelli XXIII.14–15 ('sealmas sang 7 his gebedum ætfealh') and also XXIII.82–3 ('þone geþygde 7 his feorh bigfer[c]ede'), both of which are paralleled in the *Vespasian Life*.

63 See especially Inna Koskenniemi, *Repetitive Word Pairs in Old and Early Middle English Prose* (Turku: Turin Yliopisto, 1968). For a discussion of this technique in relation to Old English poetry, see Caie, ed., *Judgment Day II*, 43. Caie here comments that the use of doublets in the poem is 'one of the most common methods of elaboration used by the Old English poet.'

64 Gonser, ed., *Das angelsächsische Prosa-Leben*, 78–81.

65 Vercelli XXIII.81 'idle and unnytte' may be compared with the *Vespasian* 5.83–4 *idle*.

66 For verb-doublets that are the same in both versions, see Vercelli XXIII.28 ('gedrefed ȝ gewundod'), and XXIII.114 ('genamon ȝ hine swungon'). For pairs that contain variants, see Vercelli XXIII.2 ('bræcon ȝ dulfon') and *Vespasian* 4.9 ('gedulfon ȝ bræcon'); Vercelli XXIII.52 ('cunedon ȝ costedon') and *Vespasian* 5.13 ('fandedon ȝ costodon'); Vercelli XXIII.77 ('ongite ȝ geþence') and *Vespasian* 5.76–7 ('ongite ȝ oncnawe'); and Vercelli XXIII.110–11 ('bysmrigan ȝ wæcan') and *Vespasian* 5.158 ('swencan ȝ costian'). For doublets that are only in Vercelli, see Vercelli XXIII.63 ('[s]we[n]cst ȝ wecest' [cf. *Vespasian* *swincst*]); XXIII.84–5 ('bemurnon ȝ ... wæðdon' [cf. *Vespasian* 'sorhgodon, þæt hi oferswiðdon wæron']); XXIII.108 (*læddon* ȝ *swencton* [cf. *Vespasian* *swencton*]); and XXIII.151 ('leofað ȝ rixað').

67 For examples of adverbial doublets, see Vercelli XXIII.23 and *Vespasian* 4.59 ('hider 7 byder'), as well as the triplet in Vercelli XXIII.91–2 ('ufan 7 neoþan 7 æghwænon'), and in *Vespasian* 5.109–10 ('ufan 7 neoðan 7 eghwonen').

68 Clemoes, *Interactions*, 43–5 and 155–7. Clemoes’s comparison of the devil-as-archer motif in Hrothgar’s sermon with the portrayal of the same motif in Felix’s Latin *Vita sancti Guthlaci* is perhaps only fortuitous in the context of this study, as the same motif can be seen in a wide range of Latin and vernacular prose works. For further discussion of this motif in Old English literature, see 156 n. 34.

69 Clemoes's finding that these homilies contain an abundance of homiletic verb-doublets is derived from data found in Scragg, 'Compilation,' 202–3 and 205.

71 Thomas N. Hall has suggested (pers. comm.) that the final lines of Vercelli XXIII derive from a conventional Latin homiletic formula something like 'et uiuit et regnat in gloria regni celesti per omnia secula seculorum;' see further his 'Early Medieval Sermon,' 203–69.

72 Cf. Jane Roberts's discussion ('Old English Prose,' 375–6) of the parallels between the ending of Vercelli XXIII and that of Vercelli XXI and XXII.

73 Liuzza, 'Old English *Christ* and *Guthlac*,' 1–11. For the opposing opinion that the opening sequence of *Guthlac A* presents an integral part of that poem, see L.K. Shook, 'The Prologue of the Old English *Guthlac A*,' *MS 23* (1961): 296–302, at 295, and Sharma, 'Reconsideration,' 185–200. Also see Roberts, *Guthlac Poems*, 25–6, who reads lines 1–29 as facing both ways but properly part of *Guthlac A*.

74 It should be noted that Scragg inserts the phrase *pry dagas* from the parallel wording in the Vespasian *Life*, 4.70–1; there are also in the *Life* minor inversions with respect to word order (see the full passage at 4.68–73). Here, as in the Vercelli text, the verb (*ge*)*cyrran* emphasizes Guthlac’s bewilderment; the past participle *gewundod* and the noun *ormodnysse* also present verbal parallels with the passage directly preceding this one (omitted entirely in Vercelli XXIII), which states that the devil’s arrow ‘hæfde hine ... mid ormodnysse gewundodne’ (‘had wounded him with pride’).

75 Such references cumulatively serve to contrast the quiet and stillness that ensues after Guthlac quells the devils: we are told later in the *uita* that Bartholomew commanded the devils to return Guthlac to his dwelling ‘cum magna quietudine, sine ulla offensionis molestia’ (‘with great quiet, without any molestation of offence’; VSG 106/28).

76 Scragg emends the manuscript reading *forgifest* ('you will forgive') to *g[e]fe[h]st*, though the error may demonstrate further the importance of forgiveness in the Vercelli homily.

77 This second passage is also notably included in Gonser's list of word-doubling (Gonser, ed., *Das angelsächsische Prosa-Leben*, 77–81. Here, the Latin *in delictis* ('in sins') is translated in the *Vespasian Life* as *synnum* and *gyltum* ('in sins and transgressions'), though in the Vercelli homily only as *synnum* ('in sins').

78 See further the VSG, chapters 12–18, and also the *Vespasian Life*, [chapter 2](#).

79 On the similarities between this motif of 'binding' and 'drawing out' by devils and that found in Vercelli XXII.49–50, see below, 264–5.

80 The *Life* also presents a variation for the final doublet found in the above passage: instead of the phrase ‘mid maran brogan bysmrigan and wæcan’ (‘with greater terrors [they would] ill treat him and afflict him’; Vercelli XXIII.110–11), the *Life* substitutes the virtually similar ‘mid maran bysmerum swencan and costian’ (‘with greater insults [they would] afflict and deceive him’; 5.157–8).

- 81 This definition is derived from Horst R.P. Battles, 'The Art of the *Scop* : Traditional Poetics in the Old English *Genesis A* ' (unpublished PhD diss., University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 1998), 168–240. For earlier discussions of the echo-word, see further John O. Beaty, 'The Echo-Word in *Beowulf* with a Note on the *Finnsburg Fragment*,' *PMLA* 49 (1934): 365–73; and James L. Rosier, 'Generative Composition in *Beowulf*,' *ES* 58 (1977): 193–203. For a recent discussion of the use of this technique in *Elene*, the poem in the Vercelli Book that directly precedes Vercelli XXIII, see Samantha Zacher, 'Cynewulf at the Interface of Literacy and Orality: The Evidence of the Puns in *Elene*,' *Oral Tradition* 17.2 (2002): 346–87 at 356–8.

82 Scragg (VH, 383) has argued that the exclusion of text in the corresponding Vercelli passage is likely scribal rather than authorial, as the repetition of the same *eardigan began* several lines later in the Vespasian version makes possible eye-skip through homoeoteleuton. See Roberts, 'Two Readings,' 201–10 at 203–4, who discusses two cruces in the parallel passages from Vercelli XXIII.8–12. Roberts demonstrates that the Vercelli reading *gemetegung* ('moderation'; line 9) picks up on the concept of *temper-antia* ('temperance') in the Latin.

83 Cf. Roberta Frank's definition of paronomasia in 'Some Uses of Paronomasia in Old English Scriptural Verse,' *Speculum* 47 (1972): 207–26 at 208 n. 7. For a similar use of paronomasia on the element *-lif* -, see also Vercelli XXIII.56–7. A pun on *lif* ('life') and *geleafa* ('belief') is also apparent in the following statement made by the devils to Guthlac: 'We syndon gewisse þines lifes, and þines geleafan trumnesse we witon' ('We are aware of your life and we know the strength of your belief'; XXIII.50–1). That both these subsequent puns are made by the devils potentially suggests a tone of mockery in reference to Guthlac's holy way of life.

84 See above, 198–9, for a further discussion of rhetorical devices in this passage.

85 Sarah Downey has recently pointed out verbal parallels between this description of the demons (at VSG 102/6–14) and their later depiction (at VSG 114/15–25): ‘Nam leo rugiens **dentibus** sanguineis morsus rabidos imminebat; taurus vero mugitans, unguibus terram fodiens, cornu cruentum solo defigebat; ursus denique infrendens, validis ictibus brachia commutans, verbera promittebat; coluber quoque squamea **colla** porrigens, indicia atri veneni monstrabat, et ut brevi sermone concludam, aper grunnitum, lupus ululatum, equus hinnitum, cervus axatum, serpens sibilum, bos balatum, corvus crociturum ad turbandum veri Dei verum militem, **horrissonis vocibus** stridebant’ (‘The roaring lion threatened fierce bites with its bloody **teeth**; while the bellowing bull, digging the ground with its hoofs, fixed a gory horn in the soil; finally the gnashing bear, beating its paws alternately in heavy blows, threatened blows; the serpent, stretching its scaly **neck**, showed signs of black poison; and, as I may briefly conclude, the boar cried out its grunt, the wolf its howl, the horse its whinny, the stag its bellowing, the serpent its hiss, the ox its lowing, the crow its cawing, all in **horrible-sounding voices** to trouble the true servant of the true God’; trans. Downey, *Intertextuality*, 84–5). As Downey shows, this passage is ultimately borrowed and expanded from Evagrius’s *Life of Anthony* (ibid.).

86 In their editions of the *Vespasian Life*, both Gonser and Goodwin supply the variant adjective *hasrynigende*, also a hapax legomenon. Roberts, however, has shown that the MS reading *hasrunigendu(m) stefnu(m)* is closer to the Latin formulation *clamoribus raucisonis* ('Old English Prose Translation,' 372). See further Scragg's discussion of these compounds in *VH*, 394 n. 98, and his citation of a contemporary Old English gloss *hasgrumelum* contained in one of the manuscripts of Felix's *VSG* (in *CCCC* 389).

87 Jane Roberts has argued elsewhere that *misscrence* may mean ‘horribly shriveled,’ explaining that the *-croc* - element may indicate a borrowing from Old Norse. Roberts tentatively argues that the use of variant forms in Vercelli XXIII and the Vespasian *Life* ‘might most easily be resolved by assuming that the original translation had a pair of linked adjectives, each separately retained’ (Roberts, ‘Old English Prose Translation,’ 371–2).

88 Hill, 'The Middle Way,' 182.

89 On the topic of fasting as it pertains to Vercelli XXIII and the Latin *uita*, see further Downey, 'Intertextuality,' especially 49–50, and 55.

90 Jones, 'Envisioning the *Cenobium*,' 288.

91 The importance of descriptions relating to space and territory have also been noted previously with reference to *Guthlac A*, most notably by Sharma, 'Reconsideration,' 185–200, whose thoughtful discussion provided much inspiration for this chapter, and Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Guthlac's Crossings,' *Quaestio* 2 (2001): 1–26.

⁹² See 201 above for a discussion of this conceit as it appears in both Vercelli XXIII.13–20 and XIV.10–15.

93 Sarah Downey, however, has recently argued that Felix likely borrowed this figure from Evagrius's *Life of Anthony* rather than directly from the Vulgate as the wording of the Latin is closer to this text ('Intertextuality,' 37).

94 Elsewhere in Vercelli XXIII Guthlac's homestead is still considered a *westene*, or 'wasteland'; see, XXIII.9, 23, 56, 58, 59, 106, and 109. On the oddness of *græswang*, see Roberts, 'Guthlac of Crowland, a Saint for England.'

95 For the link between this action and the fall of angels in Old English literature, see for example, *Genesis A*, lines 28–33, Ælfric’s *De initio creaturae CHI.1*, 10.20–5, and Vercelli XIX.17–23. On the location of Satan’s throne in the northern part of heaven, see Paul Salmon, ‘The Site of Lucifer’s Throne,’ *Anglia* 81 (1963): 118–23, and the follow-up article by Thomas D. Hill, ‘Some Remarks on “The Site of Lucifer’s Throne,”’ *Anglia* 87 (1969): 303–11.

96 For a parallel effect in *Guthlac A*, see Sharma, 'Reconsideration,' 187–91.

97 The Vespasian version substitutes the synonymous *forgitende* (5.131) for *ofergeoto*, while completely missing out the second *upgeotan*.

98 Sharma, 'Reconsideration,' 187–91, comments extensively on the use of similar epithets denoting movement through boundaries in his examination of *Guthlac A*.

99 In the Vespasian version (in a portion omitted from the Vercelli text), the effect of Bartholomew's visitation on the despairing and anxious Guthlac is that his 'heorte and his gebanc eall wæs onlihtod' ('heart and his thought was completely lightened'; Vespasian 4.98–9). The effect is not unlike the 'lightening' effect Bartholomew has at the end of Vercelli XXIII on the devils.

100 The etymology is given in the *Vespasian Life* at 106.12–107.11, and in the Latin *uita* at 76.27–78.8. For commentary on the meaning of Guthlac’s name, see Whitney F. Bolton, ‘The Background and Meaning of *Guthlac*,’ *JEGP* 61 (1962): 595–603, and Fred C. Robinson, ‘The Significance of Names in Old English Literature,’ in *The Tomb of Beowulf: And Other Essays on Old English* (Cambridge, MA, and Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 185–218, at 206–12.

101 Shook is to be credited with having first made this association between the 'prologue' of *Guthlac A* and the *Visio Pauli* in his 'Prologue,' 296–302. Also see Roberts, 'Inventory,' 203, and her 'Sources and Source Hunting,' 1–18; and Antonette diPaolo Healey, ed., *Old English Vision*, 44–5.

102 Roberts, 'Inventory,' 203. For further topical connections with the Fursey legend, see Roberts, 'Guthlac of Crowland, a Saint for England.'

103 See above, 152–3.

104 On the similarities between this motif of ‘binding’ and ‘drawing out’ by devils and that found in Vercelli XXII.49–50, see above, 152–3.

105 Jones, 'Envisioning the *Cenobium*, 291.

106 It is perhaps worth qualifying that a Benedictine prejudice does not necessarily tie to a Reform context. This caveat is especially pertinent in light of the present discussion of the Vercelli Guthlac homily, since it appears in a manuscript which has not securely been linked to the Reform itself.

108 On the Greek etymology of Andreas, and the use of onomastic puns for this name in Old English, see Fred Robinson, 'Some Uses of Name-Meanings in Old English Poetry,' in *The Tomb of Beowulf*, 229–31. Robinson, citing Jerome's *Liber interpretationis hebraicorum*, asserts that 'Andreas is rightly to be interpreted *secundum graecam etymologiam* α'πὸ τοῦ α'νδρός, *hoc est a uiro, uirilis adpellatur*' (230). On the name-pun in *Elene*, see Zacher 'Cynewulf at the Interface,' 379.

109 For example, Éamonn Ó Carragáin has noted significant correspondences between the vision in Vercelli XXIII and in *Elene*, the poem that directly precedes the homily in the Vercelli Book. See further his 'Vercelli Collector,' 69–70 and 75–85.

¹ See 59, 71, and 92 above.

2 See 209–16 above.

³ See 128–39 and 140–78 above.

⁴ See 145–9 above.

⁵ See 225–68 above.

6 See 71–4 above.

7 See 53–4 above.

⁸ See 55, 114, and 126–7 above.

⁹ Cf. the parallel phrase ‘bodiað and bremað beorhtne geleafan’ (**Christ II**, line 483).

- 10 I suppose the argument could be made that the concentration of vocatives in **Andreas** represent the poet's attempt to capture conversational speech; however, the context of Andreas's speech to Christ seems closer to religious exhortation.

11 See 38 above.

- 12 Andy Orchard discusses these unique parallels in his ‘**The Dream of the Rood : Cross-References,**’ in **New Readings in the Vercelli Book**, ed. Zacher and Orchard (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, forthcoming).

13 See above, 30–62.

- 14 Phyllis Roberts, 'The **Ars Praedicandi** and the Medieval Sermon,' in **Preacher, Sermon, and Audience**, ed. Carolyn Meussig (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 41–62, at 43–4.

- 15 The text and translation are from S.K. Brehe, 'Reassembling the First Worcester Fragment,' **Speculum** 65 (1990): 521–36 at 530 (text) and 530–1 (translation). In addition to those emendations displayed in brackets, Brehe has had to shuffle the names of the books of the Bible and also to make minor changes to the names of bishops in order to recover the alliterative metre; compare with an earlier edition of the poem in Bruce Dickens and R.M. Wilson, **Early Middle English Texts** (New York, 1951), 1–2, notes 151–2 (reprinted by Brehe in his article 'Reassembling,' 522–3), which contains passages in verse and in prose where the metre appeared to Dickens and Wilson to fail. For further discussion of the poem, see Seth Lerer, 'Old English and Its Afterlife,' in **The Cambridge History of Medieval Literature**, ed. David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 7–35 at 22–5. The poem has also recently been treated by Christopher Cannon, **The Grounds of English Literature** (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), esp. 34–41. For Cannon, the poem reflects not so much a 'cataclysm' of learning in the English church as a celebration of continuity (36–42).

- 16 William of Malmesbury's account can be found in his **Gesta pontificum Anglorum**. The account of his singing is as follows: 'natiuae quoque linguae non negligebat carmina – adeo ut, teste libro Elfredi, ... nulla umquam aetate par ei fuerit quisquam. Poesim Anglicam posse facere, cantum componere, eadem apposite uel canere uel dicere ... Hoc commento sensim inter ludicra uerbis scripturarum insertis ciues ad sanitatem reduxisse' ('And so too he did not neglect poems written in his own language, and to such an extent that – according to the book [**sc.** the **enchiridion**] of Alfred – no age ever saw his equal. He was able to write poetry in English, compose music for them and sing or recite them as the occasion demanded ... Through such a strategy, by conspicuously inserting the words of scripture into his vernacular compositions, he led the people back to salvation'; translation from David Preest, **William of Malmesbury: The Deeds of the Bishops of England** [Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002]). On the credibility of this passage, see Paul G. Remley, 'Aldhelm as Old English Poet: **Exodus**, Asser and the **Dicta Ælfredi**,' in **Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge**, ed. Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe and Andy Orchard (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 90–108, at 90–2. On Aldhelm's implementation of vernacular artistry in his Latin writings, see Andy Orchard, **The Poetic Art of Aldhelm**, CSASE 8 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), esp. chaps. 2–3.

- 17 Cannon (**Grounds**, 39) detects a different order in the names catalogued, arguing that they reflect two distinctive periods of conversion and reform in the Anglo-Saxon church.

- 18 The oft-quoted citation from Alfred is as follows: ‘Swæ clæne hio wæs oðfeallenu on Angelcynne ðæt swiðe feawa wæron behionan Humbre ðe hiora ðeninga cuðen under-standan on Englisc, oððe furðum an ærendgewrit of Lædene on Englisc areccan; ⁊ ic wene ðætte noht monige begiordan Humbre næren’ (‘So general was the [i.e., learning or teaching] decay in England that there were very few on this side of the Humber who could understand their rituals in English, or translate a letter from Latin into English; and I believe that there were not many beyond the Humber’), ed. and trans. Henry Sweet, in *King Alfred’s West-Saxon Version of Gregory’s ‘Pastoral Care’* (Oxford: EETS o.s. 45, 50, 1967–68), 2–3.

19 Brehe, 'Reassembling,' 536.

20 The scansion is demonstrated more fully by Brehe, 'Reassembling,' 526.

11 Sisam, *Vercelli Book*, 56.

12 See the explanation in n. 7 above.